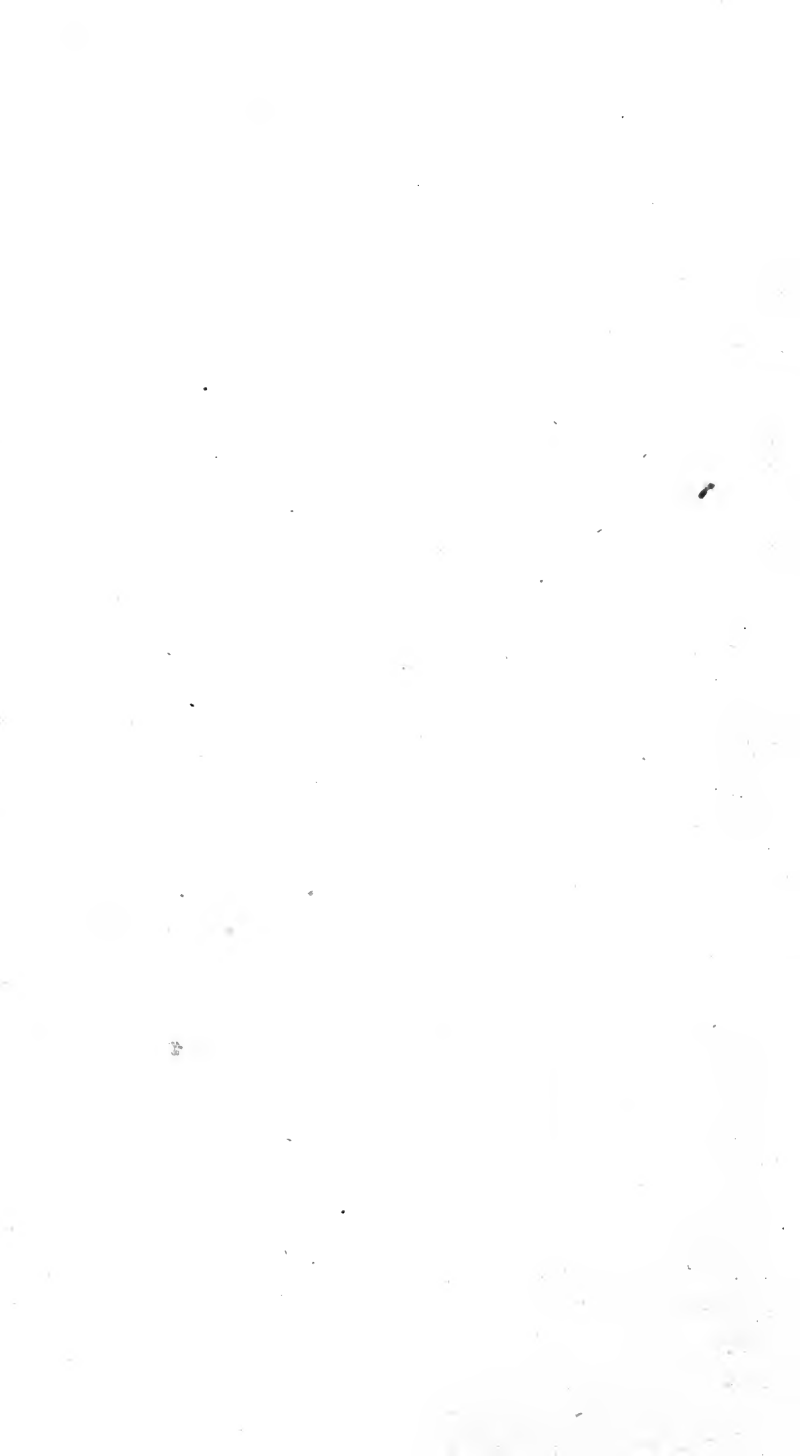


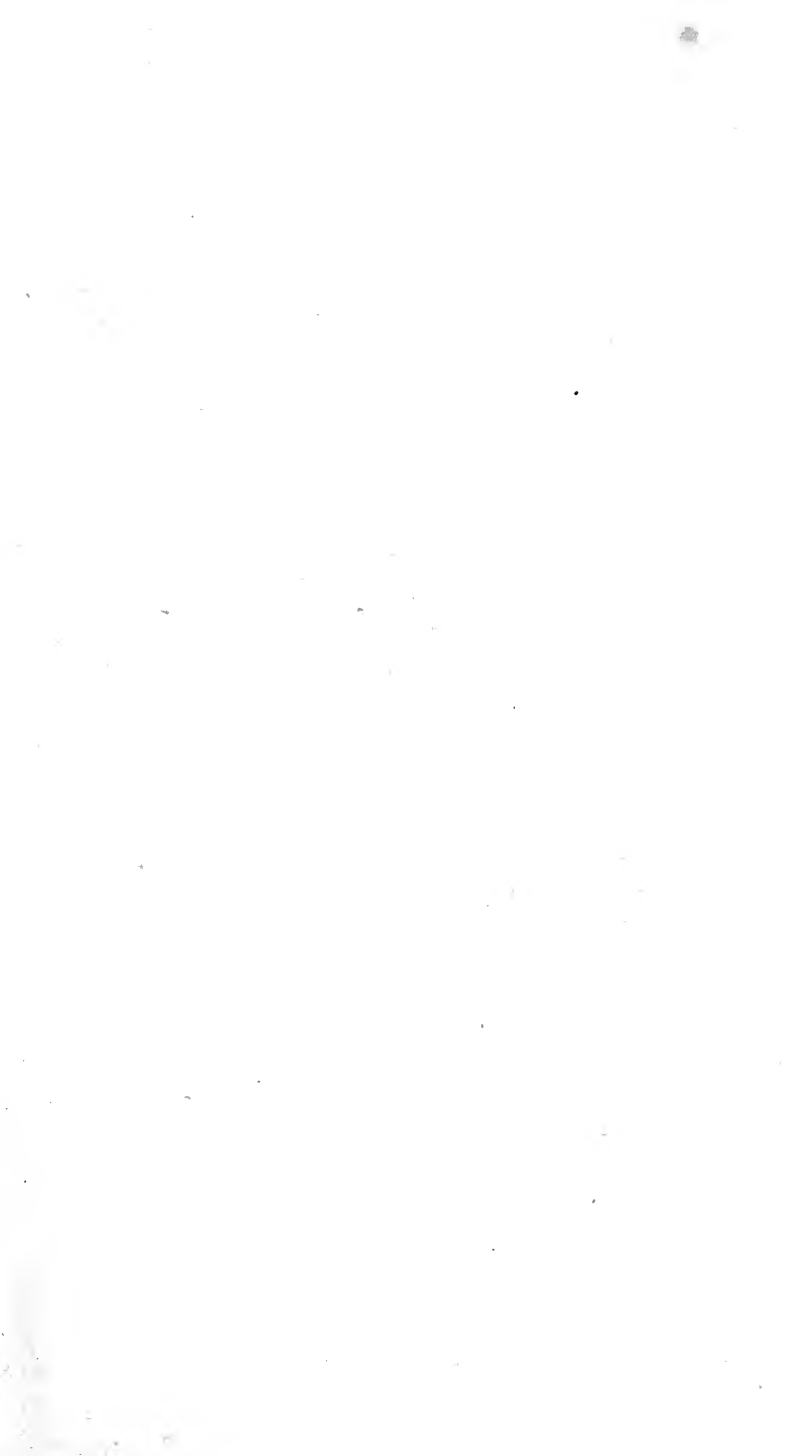


David Thomas.

In Bangor.

14 Nov. 1924.







THE
EXILES OF LUCERNA.







THE
EXILES OF LUCERNA;

OR,

THE SUFFERINGS OF THE WALDENSES DURING
THE PERSECUTION OF 1686.



“ They had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment : They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword : they wandered about in sheep skins, and goat skins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented—(of whom the world was not worthy)—they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

HER. xi. 36, 37, 38.

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P R E F A C E.

IT is remarkable, that previous to the researches of Faber, Gilly, Jones, Acland, and others, the Protestants of the Alps of Dauphiny and Piedmont—those interesting links which connect the primitive with the reformed church, were known among us little more than by name.

The object of the following narrative will be sufficiently attained, if it contribute, in any degree, to awaken an additional interest in behalf of that extraordinary race—whose descendants continue at this day, living witnesses for the truth in the midst of papal darkness—“beloved,” not less for their own, than “for their fathers’ sakes.”

The story is intended to give an outline of the most remarkable of those dreadful persecutions, that have so often desolated their valleys, and which issued in one of the most

brilliant triumphs of heroism on record.* Though strictly historical, fictitious characters and events have been occasionally introduced, in order to give continuity to the narrative, as well as to afford scope for a fuller elucidation of the distinguishing virtues of the Vaudois character.

The Appendix consists of Notes illustrative of some of the statements contained in the preceding pages, with a short sketch of the present condition of the Waldensian church.

* See Appendix, note A.

THE
EXILES OF LUCERNA.

CHAPTER I.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold :
Ev'n them, who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not ; in thy book record their groans,
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant ; that from these may grow
An hundred others, who having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe !

MILTON.

IN the recesses of the great chain of mountains, which form the barrier between France and Italy, are situated the three secluded valleys of Lucerna, Perosa, and St Martino, which for ages have signalized themselves in their struggles for religious

freedom. Truth, when banished from the altars of the church, the halls of learning, and the palaces of kings, found a safe asylum among these alpine solitudes; and their inhabitants, a simple race of peasants, nobly struggled for a thousand years, against the corruptions of papal Rome, while the rest of Europe lay prostrate at her feet. But the annals of the persecuted Vaudois are written in blood, and the statute-book of the house of Savoy is darkened with sanguinary edicts against this innocent people. Age after age witnessed the flames of persecution raging in their peaceful valleys—laying their hamlets in ashes, and condemning the inhabitants, amid the rigours of winter, to wander among their fastnesses, with often no home but the cavern, no pillow but the sod, no prospect of any relief from their sufferings, but the grave! The homes of the Waldenses are emphatically classic ground. Every mountain and valley, every rock and cave, has some tale to tell, of daring deeds and noble achievements, which, while a thousand exploits of heroic valour, far less worthy of celebrity, have been immortalized in poetry, or sculptured in marble, are all that remain to perpetuate the Christian patriotism of men, “of whom the world was not worthy.” Greece had but her one Thermopylæ—the valleys of Clusone and St Martino have their hundred

Apart from these moral and religious associations, the valleys themselves possess a combination of scenery of surpassing grandeur. The sublime and beautiful in nature, seem to have their living archetypes in the favoured spot which divine providence selected for depositing the precious seed, which was afterwards to have for its field "the world." Alps piled on Alps in majestic confusion, their summits resting amid the clouds, and mantled in eternal snows, seem as if purposely thrown as a rampart of defence around this asylum of truth; while the valleys beneath, are so many little store-houses, into which nature has poured, with lavish profusion, her most exuberant bounties; and whose unrivalled loveliness at the present hour, may satisfy the passing traveller, that they need not the pen of romance to add enchantment to their living wonders. He may find a sterner magnificence, a more awful grandeur, in the mountain passes overhung by the frowning peaks of the Ungfrau or the Wetterhorn; or in gazing on the icy solitudes of Mont Blanc, with its throne of glaciers, and curtain of tempests; but to witness the rare combination of sublimity and beauty—to see nature, at one glance, in her smiles and in her frowns—in her sternest and in her softest colouring—let him place himself in the centre of Lucerna, with its waving fields, and smiling

hamlets, and sylvan wonders at his feet, and the colossal amphitheatre of Alps bounding the horizon.

Previous to the year 1686, the tyrannical edicts of the house of Savoy, had been for some time suspended. The sword of persecution was sheathed, and the Vaudois hailed with joy the temporary respite from their sufferings. Each was once more permitted to worship in peace, "under his own vine and his own fig-tree;" and all seemed to be token that this tranquillity was to be permanent. The reigning sovereign, Amadeus, though the slave of bigotry, and the blind devotee of Rome, was not unmindful of the loyal obedience of his Waldensian subjects. They had been taught from their cradles, that to honour the king, was the duty which, in their creed, stood second only to fearing God; and although a crowd of confessors thronged the palace of Turin, to whom nothing would have been more congenial than the extirpation of the hated race; yet their innocent lives, and uncorrupted morals, could afford nothing for the tongue of slander to whisper against them.

But the darkest cloud is often preceded by a bright sunshine. This season of peace was the precursor of a fiercer tempest, than had ever yet desolated their valleys. Once more, their parental roofs were to be laid in ashes, and themselves and families expelled from their homes. A new adver-

sary appeared on the field, and laid a deadlier train for their destruction. Louis XIV. of France, the scourge and despot of his country and age, trampling on the most sacred and inviolable obligations, revoked the edict of Nantes, which had granted a free liberty to Protestants, to worship God according to their consciences. He scoured the valleys of Dauphiny—penetrated into those fastnesses in the south-east of his dominions, which for ages had been the homes of his Protestant subjects, laid their peaceful villages in ruins, and purpled the mountain streams with their blood. The persecuted mountaineers sought a refuge among the valleys of the Vaudois; but the tyrant, not satisfied with banishing them from his own frontiers, demanded of the Duke of Savoy to execute the same work of extirpation in the valleys of Piedmont, as had been effected in those of Queyras and Fressinière. The young monarch expressed his unwillingness to unsheath the sword against a portion of his subjects, who, although hostile in their faith, were yet devoted in their allegiance. But Louis was resolved, at all hazards, on the execution of the tragedy. By means of his envoy, he made the Duke aware, that in the event of his refusal, he was himself ready to march at the head of 14,000 men, to wreak his vengeance on the heretics. Amadeus saw that there was no alternative but to obey.

Orders were given to prepare for the bloody campaign; and, burning with revenge at the recollection of former struggles, the flower of the Sardinian chivalry marched to the field of contest, determined, by one desperate effort, to wipe out the stain which the bravery of these mountaineers had affixed, in former times, on the standards of Savoy.

It is to this sanguinary episode in their history, that our narrative refers.

On the evening of the 19th of April 1686, the Vaudois received the intelligence, that in two days they should have to choose between the alternatives, of submission to the Pope, or death. The dismal tidings came like a thunderbolt upon the peaceful peasantry. Their first impulse was a rush to arms. They retreated, with their wives and families, to their mountain fastnesses. Every cavern became a fortress—every rock a battlement; and for two days the bravest legions of Savoy trembled beneath a handful of cottage patriots. But at length, overpowered by numbers, they found themselves forced to resign the unequal contest; and on the stipulation that they should be allowed to evacuate their valleys in safety, they laid down their swords at the feet of the invaders. But they dearly paid for this act of submission. Their homes and sanctuaries were converted into dungeons, into which fourteen thousand innocent

captives were hurried, loaded with chains—their only companions, darkness, famine, torture, crime! The pen recoils from the task of recounting cruelties, too harrowing for tongue to tell—too horrible to be dragged to the light of day! The blood runs cold at the tale of innocent babes torn from the maternal breast, scalped before their parents' eyes, and their brains thrown into the trough as food for the dog: of burning pincers in the hands of the brutal soldiery, tearing the flesh, and piercing the vitals of the sufferers; boiling caldrons, the rack, and the wheel; flaming faggots; oil poured on the burning flesh, to prevent it roasting, so as to protract the agony; beds of straw in pestilential dungeons swarming with vermin, and in the heat of summer engendering loathsome diseases, which terminated in a slow, yet welcome death! After languishing for six months amid such sufferings, three thousand wretched survivors were all who remained to experience the sad clemency of exile from their native homes; and of these, alas! many perished, unpitied and unknown, among the dreary Alpine solitudes through which they were doomed to wander.

It was on the 17th of October that the exiles set out on their journey. Early in the morning, little groups were seen wending their way up such of the narrow glens and rocky steeps as appeared

to be attended with least peril and fatigue. Even in this, one of the darkest hours of their history, Heaven seemed to cast a propitious smile on the outcasts. The sun rose in unclouded splendour—his beams gilding the whole range of Alps and Appenines, as with burnished gold. Many were the fond and lingering looks which these pious mountaineers cast behind them, on the scenes of loveliness they were about to leave, and which seemed to be endeared to them a thousand-fold, under the bitter consciousness, that to these abodes of innocence and peace, the homes of their childhood, the graves of their forefathers, they were now to bid farewell, in all probability, for ever !

But although driven from their fold, the great Shepherd of Israel had not deserted his chosen flock. The torch of the Reformation had now, for more than half a century, been kindled in Switzerland, and was burning with undiminished lustre. A safe asylum was thrown open for the fugitives, among the Alps of Berne, or on the shores of Geneva ; and thither, with hearts uplifted to a reigning Providence, the pilgrim wanderers bent their steps.

Ere the sun had gained the meridian, on the day to which we refer, the more active of the exiles had surmounted the toilsome Alpine ascents, and bivouacked for the night, on the opposite side of

the mountain. Many of the weaker and more feeble, had been destined never to see the light of another sun; they either found a cold sepulchre amid the snows, or preferred to retrace their steps, and perish with their innocent babes, in the flames that consumed their cottages and hamlets.

As the day was drawing to a close, and the sun rapidly sinking in the west, a solitary family wound their way up the rugged path of the Col de la Croix. Their ascent lay along the foaming waters of the Pelice, a rapid torrent which skirts the base of the mountain, and which, after being lashed into fury by a hundred cataracts, in its precipitous course from the valley above, glides softly along the beautiful vale of Lucerna.

The tottering step of the old man, who formed the centre of the group, explained the cause of their lingering. His white flowing locks told the tale of many winters. His eye, though sunk, still retained much of its natural vivacity, and the resigned expression which was seated on his countenance, bespoke that he was the expectant of a nobler than earthly heritage, and that he was only waiting the call of his Master, that he might, like the aged Simeon, "depart in peace!" He leaned for support on his two companions, the only surviving props of his declining days, the one a son about eighteen years old, and whose countenance told

what the father's must have been, ere age and growing infirmities had furrowed his cheek with wrinkles, and bedimmed the lustre of his penetrating eye; the other a girl in the bloom of youth, who was struggling in vain to repress the bursts of sorrow, which were agonizing her heart.

They had accomplished little more than half the ascent, when the aged man sunk beneath the burden of fatigues, which his exhausted frame could sustain no longer. They had fortunately arrived at a spot where a natural grotto was formed in the rock. Here the devoted boy erected a little tent, with the coverings he had provided for their nightly shelter; and spreading a couch on the green turf, kindled a fire with a few withered branches which were scattered around.

This aged exile was Rodolph Vinçon, the pastor of Villar, one of the loveliest of the Vaudois communes, and his two youthful attendants were all who remained of a once prosperous and happy family. The six months' dreary confinement, which had proved fatal to so many thousands of their friends, they had survived, only through the kindness of the guardian of their captivity, who, with a clemency experienced by few of the unhappy sufferers, had been softened into pity for the grey hairs of the patriarch, and the distress of his unfortunate children.

The day on which the royal edict was issued to depart from their valleys, although hailed as a jubilee by many of the wretched captives who had been doomed to the endurance of sufferings worse than death, was viewed by Rodolph Vinçon in another and a far different light. With the calmness and resignation of a Christian martyr, he beheld in it the signal that the time of his departure was speedily to arrive; knowing that the toils and sufferings of an Alpine journey were what his aged frame would be unable to endure,—he felt assured that the hour which was to exile many of his flock from their earthly homes, would safely usher him into those heavenly mansions, whose bright visions had, in many a dark hour of sorrow, terminated the perspective of this valley of tears.

Herbert and Alice had prevailed on their beloved parent, to avail himself of such rest, as the rude couch they had just spread could offer. The courageous boy had contrived, till now, to suppress his agitated feelings. While providing, as best he could, for his father's present wants, he had succeeded in shutting out of view the prospect of the future; but now he was left to be the prey of his own feelings,—he had now time to revolve in his mind all the dismal events of a day that had subjected many of his dearest relatives to the endurance of sufferings, which his sensitive mind

shrunk from contemplating, and which had condemned an aged father to be the nightly tenant of a naked solitude, which, in all likelihood, would prove his grave. A relentless foe was behind—threatening tempests, and unknown paths, spread terror before them. Courageous and intrepid above many of his equals, his young spirit sunk under the appalling prospect. He burst into a flood of poignant grief, and, unbefriended by all but Heaven, he and the desolate heart that shared his anguish, mingled their prayers and tears together to that God, whom the orphan and the fatherless never supplicate in vain.

“Hush, hush, my children,” said the old man, who was roused from a few moments of troubled repose, by the sobs of those who were seated at his side. “Weep not for me, but weep for them who have heaped such woes on the innocent and unoffending. These hoary locks can lie as safely amid the cold snows of an Alpine grave, as underneath the green sods of Villar. It is well—it is well! I had fondly dreamed of a brighter and calmer evening to my days, but to-morrow, I trust, I shall witness a lovelier dawn—a day which knows no clouds, a sun which knows no setting!”

“Dearest father,” said Herbert, struggling with the torrent of grief to which his feeling heart had involuntarily given way, “our lives are not in

our own hands. But we feel assured that the Good Shepherd of Israel—He who neither slumbers nor sleeps—will tend the couch which contains all we most love on earth; he will not leave his own sheep to perish in the wilderness. Do try to steal a few hours of repose, and perchance to-morrow's sun may find you refreshed, and a benign Providence may direct us to some spot, where you will close your eyes in a kindlier atmosphere, and recline your head on a softer pillow."

"Yes, my children," said the aged pastor, catching up the last word that fell from his son's lips, "to-morrow this head shall be pillowed in safety on a Saviour's bosom, and these eyes shall awake on a scene where there is no more night, and no more death, because there is no more sin. Nay, nay, my beloved Herbert, thou wouldst willingly persuade me, that the shadows of death are not yet to fall; but think not that I fear to enter the dark valley: its gloom is to me dispelled—its darkness is radiant with peace! The only cloud which mars the serenity of this hour, is the thought, that those I most love on earth are to be left behind me for a little longer, to endure the storms and the tempests of this wilderness world—but it is, after all, but a little stream that will separate us; a few fleeting years shall, I trust, again unite us, a holy—happy family in heaven! —— But come near me,

my children—my strength is fast failing—I am now approaching the dark waters—the deep shadows are gathering heavily around me, and this heart, ere it ceases to beat, would fain breathe its dying benedictions upon those most dear to it. — Hark you, Herbert, boy—the recollection of thy dutifulness, summons up the last tear that shall ever fill this eye—to your keeping, I intrust my beloved Alice, and the assurance of the way in which you will discharge that trust, is the most blessed which a father's heart can experience!"

"Nay, father! nay," said Alice, as she clasped his icy hand, and bathed it with her tears; "nay—talk not of death! I will willingly consent to be bereft of every thing else, but what would life be, without that which alone can now make it a blessing. If Heaven makes this solitude thy grave, it shall be mine and Herbert's too!"

"Not so, mychild," replied the father, gently chiding his dejected girl, "my time is come—my warfare is finished—full seventy winters have passed over these hoary locks. This feeble frame can work no longer in the vineyard of my heavenly Master—and he summons me home to receive the prize. But as for you, my children, ye are but setting out on the journey—ye cannot grasp the crown, before ye have carried the cross. Only be faithful to your God, and he will be faithful to you.

Give him the best of your strength, and the best of your time, and when ye come to the hour which is now about to summon me to my Father's house, ye will be able to receive the message with joy, and to look from a death full of hope, to an immortality full of glory! —— Besides, fear not this passing cloud—its darkness will soon vanish. Yes," said the aged man, exerting all the strength which yet remained, "these fires which now ye see blazing in our valleys, may lay their hamlets in ashes, 'the beautiful house in which we and our fathers worshipped may be destroyed, and all our pleasant things laid waste,' but the God of our fathers will never suffer this candle of his own lighting, to be put out—the bush may burn, but it can never—never be consumed!"

The aged saint sunk back exhausted on his couch; the effort to impart paternal counsel and dying consolation to his children, had proved too much for his frame. Herbert retired to a short distance, in hopes, that by leaving him undisturbed, he might obtain some repose, and lengthen out, a little longer, those hours which he now evidently saw were fast hastening to their close. His sister, exhausted with fatigue, had fallen asleep at the side of the couch, where she still grasped the withered hand of her father. The poor boy having provided, as he best could, for

their warmth and comfort, wrapped himself up in his cloak, and sat down by the smouldering ashes of the fire, occasionally pacing up and down to keep himself awake, and to see that no danger threatened to disturb the slumbers of his charge.

The moon had now risen above the valley—her pale beams were playing on the sparkling waters of the Pelice, and the opposite mountains were casting their deep shadows on the plain below. The tear rolled down Herbert's cheek, as he turned his eye backward on the smoking ruins of the hamlets of his native valley, and as at intervals there came floating on the breeze the tumultuary rejoicings of the enemy's soldiers, who had converted the very sanctuaries of truth, into the scenes of their sacrilegious revelries !

“ Can it be,” thought he, as he pursued his mournful reflections,—“ can it be, that the spectacle which I now behold, is aught else but the vision of some feverish dream. Can one short day have deprived us of a home and a father, and left us to perish unpitied in the wilderness ! Must these hands, that had fondly hoped to close the eyes of a beloved parent in the peace of his own dwelling, and to lay his head in the churchyard where sleep his own affectionate flock, be compelled to-morrow to dig his grave, and cover his cold sepulchre with the sods of the mountain !”

Wrapt in such gloomy thoughts, the afflicted boy sat motionless by the embers of his fire. Not a breath disturbed the sullen silence of the hour, save the murmurs of the stream below, or at times the bursts of unhallowed mirth to which we have referred. For nearly two hours, he had been engaged in these painful meditations, when he thought he caught the sound of footsteps, and the indistinct muttering of voices, approaching the spot where he was. His heart sunk within him ! He knew well what was to be expected from those, whose spirits were thirsting for blood and revenge. His worst fears were realized. He now heard distinctly the distant trampling of horses, and in another minute, the moonbeams disclosed two mounted figures riding towards their little bivouac. Herbert now thought all was lost. "Heavenly Father!" he cried, in the agony of despair, "have mercy upon us !"

"Ha !" exclaimed the foremost horseman, who now rode up to the little group of refugees, at the same time prefacing his words with an oath which pierced the poor boy to the heart, "here is a whole nest of these barbets of Satan.* The old bird too, hath gone to his repose ! The fire will be a more befitting couch for the carcass of this fattened here-

* The designation given to the Waldenses by the Papists.

tie ; although, by our Holy Lady, the vultures of the Col, will grudge the waste of such savoury carrion !”

“ Hark thee, holy father,” continued the rude attendant, addressing his companion, whose monastic garb bespoke what he was ; “ hark thee, holy father, these three heads will make thy most befitting benefaction at the most holy festival of St Michael ; and his Holiness will, at the very sight of such spoil, grant thee an indulgence which will wipe off thy sins and mine to boot—and perchance those of thy whole order !”

“ Hush, hush,” said the monk, “ a truce upon thy folly ; this aged man will not need thy poniard to hasten an hour, which his pallid cheek and heavy breathing tells me is even now at hand. Ere the vital spark has fled, and the fires of purgatory are kindled, let us try to impart peace to his soul, and persuade him to confess himself a son of our holy mother church.”

“ Never ! never !” cried the feeble voice of the dying patriarch, who had been roused from his troubled repose by the noise around him. “ Never shall a Vaudois be so forgetful of the debt he owes to his forefathers and his God, as basely to barter his creed, and surrender his faith, when he is at the very gate of heaven ! Ye may crimson this snow with my blood ; or, as ye threaten, feed

these flames with this body,—but never shall it be said, that Rodolph Vinçon died a death, unworthy of his name !”

The priest started back at the last words which fell upon his ear ; a flush suffused his face—he stepped yet nearer the couch of the aged sufferer, and with silent amazement fastened his eye more intently on the countenance before him, whilst his crimsoned cheek, bespoke the working of his feelings. “ Hark ye, my children,” said he, addressing the spectators of this strange mixture of contending emotions.——

“ Ha ! good father,” interrupted his attendant, “ art thou thus chicken-hearted at looking at death ; it seems as if thou wert resolved to give this old heretic thy company to purgatory !”

“ Vain babbler,” replied the monk, his eye glancing as he spoke, “ thy folly hath no bounds ; if thou knewest what dark thoughts were now rankling in this bosom, thou wouldest know, that silence was thy most becoming attitude. Go,” continued he, “ and let me not see thy face till I call for thee, or else thou shall repent thy rashness, as I must converse in private with this aged man.”

The dependant gave a tardy obedience to the commands of his superior ; only regretting that the clear moonlight would prevent him gratifying an unscrupulous curiosity, by creeping behind the

rocks, and becoming an auditor of the holy father's interview with the dying patriarch. Nor were Herbert and his sister easily prevailed upon to withdraw from the couch, at the solicitation of the stranger. Thinking that he was perhaps about to lay violent hands on their father, their first impulse was to refuse the request; but his whole manner and appearance induced them to forbear, and they waited in silence, by the remains of the midnight fire, the result of the mysterious interview.

The priest now stood alone by the side of the couch. "Death," said he, "is the hour, when the heart is most ready to forget injuries. Can Rodolph Vinçon, ere he closes his eyes on this side eternity, extend pardon to his most cruel foe; and, in token of forgiveness, clasp the hand that once came forth from his peaceful home, reeking with blood?"

"Does Rodolph Vinçon," said the dying saint, casting a look of agonizing horror on the countenance before him, "behold a living man; or is it some fiendish spirit of the dead that has come to hover over his passage through the dark valley, and haunt, with visions of terror and blood, his last moments? This eye now grows dim, the pulsations of this heart will soon be at an end—but be it so—be thou material or immaterial—spirit

or incarnate, know thou, that if thou consultest heaven's register-book, all that Rodolph Vinçon has written there, regarding the murderer of his babes, is a daily prayer for Heaven's mercy on his soul; and it would be one of the sweetest rays of comfort to him in his closing hours, to know that these prayers have been heard!"

"They have! they have!" re-echoed the agonized man, with tremulous voice, the tear of heart-felt penitence rolling down his cheek: "since that night of darkness and blood, this eye hath witnessed no spectacle but the damp walls of a cell—and this hand grasped no kindlier thing than the scourge; the stillness of midnight has oftener seen these sunken eyes filled with tears, than closed in slumber; and my hope is, that, through a life of mortification and penance, if I have thy forgiveness, I have Heaven's also!"

"If the forgiveness of a heart thou hast deeply wounded, be any source of consolation to thy spirit, I give it willingly, freely," said the aged Christian, making an effort to extend towards the monk his hand, now frozen with the chill of death. "But listen to the counsel of a veteran soldier of the cross, whose warfare is now finished. Think not, that by stripes, and watchings, and fastings, thou canst wipe out a stain, which the blood of the Great Shepherd is alone sufficient to remove; but

of this, let thine own conscience judge. Meanwhile, ere this voice falters, know, that thou hast it in thy power, to make an ample recompense to me for all the dark deeds of the past, and remove the last lingering cloud that darkens my dying hour!"

"Tell it me, my father; it shall be done, be the cost what it may!"

"See you, then," said he, "these two desolate little ones—the children of my bosom—the sweets and the stay of my chequered life—the props of my old age. It remains with *thee*, whether they shall be preserved for a little longer in this vale of tears, or perish amid the snows of this mountain!"

"If *that* be the only sorrowful ingredient," replied the Monk, "that is mingled in thy cup of death, it is removed, and thou mayst close thine eyes in peace. We meet no more till that day when the trump of the Archangel shall summon us before the Great tribunal; and though this heart may tremble at crimes which shall then be unfolded, one of these, at least, shall not be, that I have been regardless of thy dying counsels. No, holy brother, the safety of thy defenceless children shall be secured, though at the expense of the last drop of blood in these veins!"

"It is enough—it is enough," said the old man, lifting up his eyes, and breathing in silence a prayer of gratitude which his tongue was unable to ex-

press—"It is enough! I die in peace! My children, my dear children," continued he, beckoning to Herbert and Alice, who were in a moment by his side,—“God has sent me a benefactor in the hour of death: fear not to intrust yourselves to this reverend father—he will provide for your safety. Farewell—farewell!”—he clasped them to his bosom—pressed his cold lips on their cheeks—sunk back on his couch—uttered one parting groan—and next moment was sleeping sweetly in Jesus!

“Would to God,” said the monk, mingling his tears with those of the bereaved mourners—“would to God every spirit that wings its flight to another world, were as happy as that which has just fled to its rest! See the sweet smile that is still playing on the cold clay tabernacle it has left behind it—does it not bear the very stamp of heaven, the foretaste of that bliss which its deathless inhabitant has now gone to enjoy?”

“Yes,” said the disconsolate Herbert, after struggling in vain to unbosom a grief too deep for utterance—“He was sweet in life!—he seems sweeter still in death!—but, oh! the thought, that we are now to be bereft of that smile, and to travel on, solitary and alone, in this vale of tears!”

“My children! my children!” said the kind monk, “I know the bitterness of the pang which

ye now endure; and ye must look to an abler and better comforter than a wretched sinner, to bind up the wounds which now are opened. But we know that the spirit of the departed is in better keeping than with us. Would that we were all as safe! But there is no time to be lost—it grieves me to interrupt you in this the darkest hour of your earthly sorrows; but our safety renders it needful, that, after paying the last solemn tribute to the dead, we set out on our journey. We are encompassed on every side with danger; and I scruple not to say, that had Heaven not sent me to your rescue, he whom you now mourn would have encountered the king of terrors in a more dreadful form, and ye yourselves should have shared his tomb!”

Herbert, though looking forward with deep emotion to the moment when he should be called on to leave, in the barren mountain, the earthly remains of all that was dearest to him, yet saw the force of what his kind benefactor had just said. The monk perceived the contending feelings of the noble boy, and taking him aside, requested that he would take charge of his sister, whilst he and his attendant removed the body, and consigned it to its grave. Once more they kissed the cold cheek; and then betaking themselves to the foot of the couch, and covering their faces with their hands,

they wept and prayed together ! Meanwhile the monk had summoned his attendant, who, between the effects of the previous day's fatigues and excesses, had fallen fast asleep.

"Thou hast doomed me to a cold night's penance, holy father," said he, as he was aroused from his slumbers.

"Thou hast need of many such," retorted his superior, "to freeze thy folly. But I have need of thy services, for what will make thy blood flow freely : the old man whom thou sawest, but a few hours ago, stretched on his pallet, is now no more ; and I wish to bestow on his remains such burial as the present time and place will permit."

"After thou hast eased him," replied he, "of any redundant coin which the heretic may have hoarded, (which in ordinary circumstances our holy mother church would claim as her own, but which, in such unseasonable hours, methinks, rightfully reverts to thyself and me), and after thou hast exhausted thy missal over this son of perdition—and seeing that we have neither spade nor shovel—neither shroud nor coffin—neither time nor inclination"—

"Is thy trifling, fool, to have no end ? Come, leave off these unseemly provocations, and tell me where thou wouldst advise me to place this body."

“If thou wouldst but have patience, good father, thou wouldst have heard my deliverance on this head, which, I trust, will meet with the concurrence of thy superior wisdom and sanctity”—

“Quickly give it me, then,” said he, his voice deepening with indignation.

“If, then,” replied the other, “it be an expeditious interment thou desirest, tumble him into this mountain torrent, which, for the last three hours, with its thunders, has been filling my dreams with terror, as if in anticipation of the putrid heretic that was to pollute its waters—let its cataracts vent their fury on this piece of clay—and after a rough journey over rock and precipice, perchance the broken framework will sleep in safety at the bottom of some pool, where it will be nearer the spirit that has just left it than where it now reposes!”

“Were it not, unprincipled man, that thou hast proved a trusty guide, and that I know thou hast not yet recovered from thy yesterday’s intoxication, I would, with the help of this noble boy, make thee to have the first experience of thy projected journey, and let the rocks of the Pelice tell every bone in thy body at what value I estimate thy folly. Come, follow me, and obey with promptitude whatever my commands may be, and I shall reward thee accordingly.”

So saying, they went to the couch, and the monk having lit the lantern which hung at his side, they silently removed the body.

“This way, this way,” said he; “here is a little dell with some brushwood—thither let us bend our steps.” They succeeded in clearing with their hands a little spot in the thicket, where a number of large stones or masses of rock, that had rolled down the mountain, had formed a sort of natural sepulchre. Here, after frequently crossing themselves, and muttering some silent prayers, they deposited the body. And while the monk despatched his attendant to collect a heap of stones to place above it, he himself continued on his bended knees, saying mass for the departed soul. When the solemn task was ended, they returned to the two dejected mourners, who begged, ere they proceeded on their journey, to have the melancholy satisfaction of witnessing the spot where slept the revered ashes of their parent. In the meanwhile, the superior ordered his menial to have the mules in readiness, by the time they returned from paying this last and farewell tribute to the memory of a fond father.

“A more befitting place,” said the monk, as they stood by the tomb, “could not be found!—overlooking the little flock among whom he laboured, and whose graves are in the valley beneath. What

matters it though the rude winds sweep this mountain solitude, or, perchance, the winter's snow cover this grave—they cannot disturb the spirit of the departed ! No, no. I have witnessed, my children, gilded domes, underneath which sleep the ashes of sceptred monarchs—a hundred tapers blaze day and night over their sepulchres, and mitred priests disturb the fretted aisles with their prayers for the dead. Yet no slumber *there* is half so sweet as that underneath this rude heap of stones. *He* needs no fretted dome, no costly epitaph, to make him happier ! The tempests of heaven may spend their fury around his body, but the spirit is cradled in a peace which knows no breaking !”

The dejected children gazed in silence on the lonely grave. They plucked a few green branches from the surrounding shrubs, and scattered them over the top ; and then, sobbing a last, sad, farewell, they hastened to prepare for their journey !

CHAPTER II.

In Superstition's ancient pile,
Where monks their beads were telling,
Where, through the dimly lighted aisle,
The midnight chant was swelling ;

E'en there for happiness I sought,
I wept, and prayed, and fasted,
I sought her, but I found her not ;
Prayers—penance—tears were wasted.

ANON.

THE monk, whom we have described in our former chapter, when he met the three exiled Vaudois on the pass of the Col de la Croix, was prosecuting his journey to Rome on some business relative to his monastery; as well as in order to be present at one of the great annual festivals, and purchase for himself a plenary indulgence from the crimes of his youth—the darkest of which, had left its stain on the domestic hearth of the very man, whose eyes, by a mysterious providence, he had now been permitted to close in death. The events, however, already related, determined him at once to abandon his expedition. The business he had undertaken was

not so important as to render his personal presence indispensable—and he resolved to entrust its execution to his companion, of whose character he had seen sufficient, during their short acquaintance, to make him long for nothing more eagerly, than a favourable opportunity of dispensing with his services.

Having received directions as to his duty, and having his pockets replenished with some pieces of gold, which elicited from him the promise of the strictest secrecy with regard to what he had that night witnessed, Alart Besson set out on his journey, not by any means regretting the absence of his superior, whose austere habits and rigid sanctity, had imposed somewhat more restraint on his dissolute manners than he often could have desired; a full pocket, and the prospect of giving ample scope to his licentiousness, made the present appear to Alart, the happiest, as it was, at least to other two of the party, the saddest hour that had ever dawned on them.

The young Vaudois, and their deceased parent, in selecting this mountain pass for their flight, had done so, if not in ignorance of the persecution itself, at least of the extent of it in the neighbouring valleys of Dauphiny. They had anticipated, at all events, finding a temporary home among their friends in the rocky wilds of St Veran or Dormil-

leuse; after which they might either return to their native valleys, if the storm had by that time blown over, or else prolong their journey to the Protestant cantons of Switzerland. The providential interposition of the monk, snatched them from certain destruction. The flames of persecution were lighted up in every hamlet, troops were stationed at every mountain pass, and death was the only tribute which they would accept at the hands of a Vaudois. Their kind benefactor warned them, that it would be two wearisome days' journey ere he could bring them to a place of permanent safety; he imposed on them the strictest silence during the progress of their route, and requested that all questions that might be addressed to them, should be answered solely through himself.

It was about one o'clock in the morning, when the monk, mounted on one of the mules, and his young charge sharing the other, set out upon their route. These faithful animals had fortunately benefited more than their burdens by their few hours of repose. In anticipation of their long journey, the monk had taken care to distribute among them, before parting, a goodly share of the provisions he had brought with him for his own use.

They gave ample proof that they were no strangers either to precipitous paths, or unmerciful loads; and with the help of a bright moon, a starry sky,

and the reflection from the snow, which made it almost as clear as day, they had surmounted the summit of the Col, ere the sun's earliest beams were tinging the eastern horizon.

We shall not follow the little cavalcade through their long and arduous route, or relate the various times, in which detection appeared inevitable. On one occasion particularly, they were within an hair's-breadth of sharing the fate of their unhappy countrymen. As they passed the entrance to the valley of the Guil, under the frowning battlements of Chateau Queyras, they beheld its portals surmounted with the heads of some wretched Protestants, who had been massacred in cold blood. The headless trunks were piled up in heaps on either side, and hundreds were lifting up their shrieks and groans to Heaven in dread anticipation of a like horrible tragedy awaiting them. Alice, as she cast her eyes on the ghastly spectacle, thought she beheld among the crowd of victims, one of those whom, from childhood, she had numbered among her dearest friends. "Father!" she cried out, uttering a wild shriek, and utterly forgetting where she was, "there is!—there is!—"

"Unhappy girl," exclaimed the monk, "thou hast undone thyself and me too, with thy rash imprudence!"

"Ha! young damsel," cried a soldier, at the

same time seizing hold of the bridle of the mule on which the poor girl was seated,—“the tenderness of thy heart hath betrayed thee. Thy sympathies shall be brought presently into nearer proximity with their objects; we shall see whether there be not more blood in thy body than is now in thy cheeks, and we shall make this thy young kinsman, or lover, behind thee, thy executioner, and the body of thy palfry the block.”

“Hold! hold!” exclaimed father Bernard, now interposing, and struggling to assume a tone of authority, as the most effectual means of warding off the blow, which he thought would be inevitable. “But—I pardon thy folly—thou surely knowest not, that thou art putting thine unhallowed hands on the kinswoman of one of the most holy order of St Bruno? Methought thou wouldst have known the heart of woman better, than to suppose, that she could turn her eye towards these bloody trophies of your religious bigotry, without an inward shudder?”

“Be it so, be it so,” retorted the hardened sentinel, again resuming his measured pace in front of the arena of slaughter; while, at the same time, the monk beckoned to Herbert to quicken the pace of his patient animal.

Father Bernard, after frequently and devoutly crossing himself, was absorbed for some minutes in

offering thanks to his patron and to Heaven, for their deliverance from the jaws of death. He gently reproved Alice for her imprudence ; and having received a faithful promise of obedience for the future, they entered the dark and gloomy defile, which is watered by the torrent of the Guil. In this savage mountain pass, one of the wildest in Europe, the waters of the furious stream frequently occupy its entire breadth, and gigantic precipices frown in terror above the head of the traveller. At every turn, the three fugitives encountered a band of armed troops to dispute their passage ; and the sacred attire of the monk was often no safeguard against their rude and imperious scrutiny. It was evening ere they emerged from the thick forest which skirts the mouth of the gorge, and the moon had again risen in her silvery glory, when they found themselves passing the entrance to the Protestant valley of Fressinière, where a handful of Protestants had for ages contended for their religious liberties ; and, from the summits of inaccessible precipices, on which they erected their hamlets, had hurled defiance on armies which had left the trophies of conquest on a thousand fields ! At that very moment, the indomitable mountaineers had erected their standard among the huts of Dormilleuse,—a collection of wretched cottages, perched on the top of an inhospitable cliff,

which nature seemed never to have intended but as a home for the vulture or the chamois. Here, with no other bulwarks but their native rocks, and no other ammunition but the masses of stone which were scattered on the summit, these peasant patriots were mocking the efforts of the mailed legions of France. The pieces of artillery which had lately scattered in the dust some of the proudest citadels of the plain, were directed without effect on this munition of rocks,—which, like the truth for which its inhabitants were so nobly contending was impregnable !*

We shall not attempt to follow the fugitives through the remainder of their journey,—the dawn of morning found them under the castellated battlements of Briançon,—and it was twelve o'clock the following night, ere Father Bernard made known to his wearied charge the cheering tidings, that they were now approaching the end of their journey. For several hours they had been winding their way up a narrow and sequestered glen,—the moonbeams were playing on the beetling cliffs that rose majestically on either side,—and a gurgling stream murmured in the depths below ; half an hour of farther ascent brought them into a hollow, surrounded by a vast amphi-

* See Appendix, Note B.

theatre of precipitous mountains, in the centre of which the pale moonlight disclosed the solitary towers of the Grande Chartreuse. This lonely spot, selected by Bruno, a monk of the twelfth century, as being the farthest remote from any human habitation, is the original convent of the Carthusian order, and to the present hour presents a combination of scenery, if not unequalled, at least unsurpassed, by any in Europe. Many aged Fathers of the Romish faith have, for seven centuries, devoted themselves within these desolate walls, to fasting, meditation, and prayer; conceiving that these inaccessible wilds, apart from the din and bustle of life, are more favourable for their intercourse with Deity. The wild fruits of their native forests,—lettuce, bread, dried figs, and water,—form their scanty fare; while nights of penance and fasting, coupled with the inclemencies of the winter, rarely permit them to live to a very advanced age. Though thus isolated from their fellow men, and the victims of a gloomy fanaticism, many a weary traveller, who has been struggling amid the winter snows, can bear testimony to the hospitality of the solitaries, and acquit those devout, though erring enthusiasts, of the charge of misanthropy.

As the monk and his attendants approached the gloomy abode, many lights were seen in the



THE MOUNTAINS OF GREAT BRITAIN

centre window of the building. The sound of voices came floating down the valley, and broke the death-like stillness of the midnight hour. "Hark," said Father Bernard, "the holy fraternity are still busied with their vespers,—let us hasten to the gate ere the service be concluded, that we may not have again to rouse the brethren from their cells at this unseasonable hour. Alice, my child," continued he, "by the rules of our holy order, thou wilt not be permitted to enter the same walls with Herbert and myself,—but I can entrust thee with confidence to the faithful lady who resides in yonder adjoining building, and who has devoted her life to Heaven, and the reception of unhappy wanderers like thyself."

Alice nodded a grateful assent to her kind conductor,—as she had arrived at that condition of fatigue which, even had she apprehended danger from a separation from Herbert, left her no power to refuse. The monk, before demanding admittance, again imposed on both the strictest silence and secrecy with regard to their own history and religion, and the other mysterious events of the three preceding days. He gently tapped at the door.

"Who seeks admittance at this silent hour?"

demanded a voice from within; "let him speak, be he friend or foe."

"Father Bernard, holy lady, hath brought, to entrust to thy keeping, an unhappy orphan, who stands much in need of rest and comfort."

"The door of the order of St Bruno was never yet closed against the fatherless and the stranger, —nor shall it be so now," replied the same voice, —the massive portal meanwhile opening, and disclosing an aged matron, with a black cowl overshadowing her face, and an ebony crucifix, with beads, suspended from her neck. "Welcome, welcome, my child," said the aged nun; "thy face betrays furrows of sorrow, that would become better the wrinkles of this aged cheek,—and that eye speaks a tale of woe, which makes me love thee, ere I have heard thy voice. Come in, come in, and I will lay thy head on a softer pillow than, methinks, it has had for days that are past."

The monk, having whispered some private directions into the ear of his holy sister, bade Alice "good night," committing her to the keeping of the good Shepherd of Israel; and, accompanied by Herbert, made his way in silence a few hundred yards farther on, to the gate of the monastery.

At the sound of a large iron knocker, a footstep was heard approaching; and a stern voice demand-

ed "who it was that dared to disturb the holy order of St Bruno at such an untimely hour?"

"It is thy brother Bernard, holy keeper, that intrudes on thy midnight vigils."

"What! Brother Bernard!" exclaimed the astonished warder. "This portends no good; either accident or miracle must have brought thee hither."

"Thou doubtless didst not expect so speedy a return from my pilgrimage; but, I prythee, open, and I will tell thee the cause."

After the withdrawment of many a bolt, and the use of many keys, the massive door turned on its hinges, and disclosed a reverend father, with a beard white as snow, and a dim lantern in his hand. "Welcome, welcome, holy brother," said he; "welcome back from the vanities of the world, to our holy solitude. But who is this thou hast by thy side? His face tells me he hath had fully as long a journey, and stands as much in need of repose as thyself."

"This orphan boy, whom, with his sister, I found perishing beside their aged father, among the snows of the mountain, has been the cause of abandoning my purposed journey. Had it been nothing else, the charity of our holy religion would have determined me to extend to them an arm of protection; but there were other and weightier

reasons, which rendered it imperative on me to provide for the safety of these hapless wanderers."

The good father did not press his inquiries farther. The solitaries were wholly unconscious of the bloody tragedies that were transacting in the valleys around them; and, even had they known of them, they were not so under the influence of religious bigotry, as to deny to the destitute and fatherless, though of a hostile faith, a temporary shelter.

"See thou, I prythee, holy brother," said Father Bernard, "to the safety of our mules, which, if I mistake not, stand in as much need of the comforts of a night's lodging as their riders,—and hand over thy lantern to me, while I conduct this exhausted youth to share with me the shelter of my cell." Herbert was forthwith conducted, by his attendant, first through a spacious outer court, on either side of which he could discern two rudely sculptured reservoirs, or fountains. An enormous crucifix surmounted the vestibule of the monastery, before which the monk knelt in passing, and muttered over a few devotions. They passed in solemn silence through a seemingly interminable labyrinth of passages, till at last they arrived at a low door, which the monk opened by means of a key which was suspended from his girdle.

"This," said he, after closing it behind him, and

securing it by an iron bolt,—“ this is the place in which, for years, I have striven to wring out penitence, for my crimes, from this wasted body. See that worn pavement underneath the figure of the blessed Virgin,—often have these hollowed stones listened to thy father’s name and thine own, and been as wet with tears as was the grass with the dew which thou sawest to-night sparkling in the moonbeams ! But, my child, thy couch of rest is more befitting, than to listen to the tale of a wretched sinner. Here is a bed for thee,—such as it is, thou art welcome to it ; and I doubt not thy fatigues will not make thee fastidious.”

“ But other considerations will,” replied Herbert. “ I will not deprive thee, kind father, of thine own couch ; thine age bespeaks that thou needest more of the comforts of life than one in the prime of youth.”

“ Hush, hush, my son,” replied the monk, whose return to his cell had recalled all the gloomy recollections which the excitement of his journey had tended for a time to dissipate ; “ talk not of comforts to a man whose sins have doomed him to feed only on the bread of sorrow. Nay, nay ; this body, for full seven years, hath never known any other couch save that damp straw in yonder recess, and no softer pillow than that rude stone ; and these eyes have gazed on no other prospect

save the fleecy clouds of heaven, which you see through yonder grated window, riding in the firmament! This night, ere this head can be pilowed on the bare earth, ye shall hear these walls reverberating the sound of the lash, whose thongs must be tripled to atone for the time during which I have intermitted my penance! Yes, continued he, putting additional knottings on the scourge that lay in an aperture of the wall; "hasten to thy slumbers, for of these, this night, there shall be none to the soul or body of Hubert Durand!" On uttering these words, he embraced Herbert, committing him to God; and opening a door at the inner corner of the cell, which led to a dismal anti-chamber, he left his young charge to meditate in silence on the strange vicissitudes, which, during the last three days, had befallen him.

The feelings of Herbert Vinçon may be imagined, when he was thus left in gloomy solitude, to reflect on the sad revolution that had taken place in his history. Torn from the embrace of a kind father,—banished from the soil of his native valleys,—with no friend now but a monk,—no home but a cloister—two names which he had been taught from his cradle to dread, as standing associated with all that was most opposed to the faith of his forefathers. But he knew that the dying words of his parent, coupled with the affectionate

kindness of his benefactor, were a sufficient guarantee for his safety ; this, combined with his own manliness of disposition, banished from his mind every apprehension. On his bended knees he offered to the God of mercies the thanksgivings of a grateful heart, and earnest entreaties for a continuance of protection to himself and his beloved sister whom he loved as his own soul, and who, by their late common bereavement, seemed to be endeared to him by ties a thousand-fold holier and stronger than before. He plucked from his bosom the sweetest pledge and memorial of his departed father,—the companion of all his wanderings,—the soother of all his sorrows,—the sweetener of all his joys,—the fountain of all his peace—the precious volume that was soiled with the fingers of many a godly ancestor. The tear rolled down his cheek, as he turned to the words of comfort which the Apostle Paul administers to his Thessalonian converts ; and which, from the tattered state of the leaf, had evidently before now imparted consolation to many a bereaved mourner: “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope ; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,” &c. Having finished this sub-

lime legacy of comfort to the afflicted Christian, he closed the book with its ancient silver clasps, and safely depositing it under his pillow, flung himself in bed, and in a few minutes his eyes were sealed in a happy forgetfulness of the bitterness and sorrows, the fears and apprehensions, the sufferings and trials, of the three preceding days.

It was fully two hours after the sun had climbed the meridian, ere Herbert opened his eyes once more on his cell and his sorrows. The full blaze of the orb of day was streaming through the barred window, and disclosed more fully than the previous night had done, the rigid austerity which was written on every part of his present abode. Its only furniture was a table, a basin of holy water, and a crucifix; whilst a ghastly representation of the horrors of purgatory was rudely delineated above the couch of the ascetic. Herbert, on listening, heard the sound of something resembling heavy blows at measured intervals, proceeding from the adjoining cell. This he was at no difficulty in concluding to be the unhappy man undergoing those self-imposed severities, which the fatigues of the preceding evening had obliged him to forego. "Holy father," cried Herbert, no longer able to restrain himself, and approaching towards the door by which he had seen him enter on the preceding night,— "holy father,

if thou hast no pity on thyself, have compassion on the poor orphan whom Providence hath cast on thee ; for if thou art resolved not to suspend thy self-tormenting penances, till thou hast driven thy spirit from its earthly tabernacle, what remains for the desolate ones thou wilt leave behind thee, but to be driven forth from this shelter to perish unpitied in the howling wilderness ?”

“Peace, peace, my child,” responded the unhappy man ; “disturb me not in my needful vocation,—my time is not yet finished,—the sun has yet another hour to travel in the firmament ere this penance can be concluded. I prythee interrupt me not, for in so doing, thou wilt only prolong what thou wouldst fain shorten.”

Herbert saw there was nothing left but to obey ; he occupied the interval in again unclasping his sacred treasure, and found in that blessed directory another and far different peace to his soul, and a surer antidote to a troubled conscience, than the deluded ascetic was seeking in the torturings of the flesh.

The monk, when he had completed his hours of penance, entered the cell where the orphan boy still continued drinking from the sweetest fountain of consolation he had met with, since the hour which drove him from his native hamlet. “It is even so, it is even so,” muttered the austere man,

in a sort of soliloquy, which was audible enough to reach the ears of Herbert,—“it is even so with youth ! its grief is keen, but not permanent—like the airy bubbles of a stream, appearing for a moment, and then vanishing for ever ! It was but yesterday that the tears were bursting from his eyes, as he thought on the melancholy fate of his aged parent ; and this morning, a smile is seated on his lips, as he traverses the unhallowed pages of some profane author—some school-book he has brought along with him to chase away the hours of sadness !”

“Thou mistakest me, holy father,” said Herbert, raising his eye from the sacred text ; “if thou thinkest that forgetfulness of a beloved parent has summoned this smile to my countenance ; or if thou thinkest a single night has effaced a sorrow, which nothing upon earth can remove. No ; hadst thou known what volume this is, it would long ere now have chased the gloom from thy countenance also ; and a peace, bright as heaven, would have lighted up the chambers of thy troubled soul.”

“It becomes not, my child,” said the monk, “the young and inexperienced to obtrude their follies on those who are midway on their earthly career, and more especially when these relate to what is most sacred. But, pardon me, my son ;—I confess

my error—I did thee injustice in charging thee with the fault of an unfeeling heart; but tell me, I prythee, what miraculous volume is this, which, like the alchemist's touch, can transmute the basest metals into the purest,—can metamorphose hell into heaven?"

"It is the Bible, holy Father," replied the artless youth; "the most precious memento that remains to me of the piety and worth of a beloved father!"

"The Bible!" exclaimed the monk, in suppressed astonishment; "I am somewhat anxious to glance at a book of which I have often heard, but never yet seen; but one, which, let me add, were it known to be within the walls of this monastery, would be given as fuel to the flames!"

"They might reduce its leaves," said the boy, "to ashes, but no flames can ever possibly obliterate from my memory the precious lessons I have derived from it. It is from its pages I have learned the impossibility of atoning with the tortures of the body for the sin of the soul."

"I will indulge thee, my child, a little in thy folly. Tell me now wherein lies thy patent receipt for peace to a guilty conscience here, and exemption from eternal torments hereafter, if it be not in keeping the body under subjection?"

"In the Cross of Christ," replied Herbert,—

“that cross which the votaries of thy creed have emblazoned on tower and cell, hall and minaret, but whose essential glories they know nothing of. Night after night thou retirest to thy cell of penance and blood, endeavouring to proclaim to thy spirit, with every stroke of the lash, ‘peace, peace,’ but has not the only response, thy bosom has ever yet yielded, been the galling confession—‘there is no peace?’ whereas, the Bible tells me, there is a peace in the blood of the Redeemer, of which all are alike warranted, and alike welcome to partake. You have only to ask that it may be given,—to put forth the hand of faith to grasp it, and that moment it may be yours!”

“Hush, hush, my child; thou art wasting thy strength in vain: tell, if thou list, these visionary dreams to others; but now thou speakest to a man who has crimes registered in heaven against him, which even a thousand nights of penance such as thou hast now witnessed, would be unable to blot out!”

“True, dear father, we are at one in our theology; and multiply thy thousand by ten thousand more, and thy guilt would be no nearer expiated than now, notwithstanding all thy austerities; but”——

“Be silent, my child,” interrupted the ascetic; “thou art but mocking me. I know enough of the

pangs of a guilty conscience, without needing to multiply their horrors. No, no, my son; if the spirit of Hubert Durand ever breathes the air of heaven, it will be by no easier road, than by a life of mortification here, and many a century of purgatory hereafter!"

"Thou mistakest me, kind father. Look here," said Herbert, turning over the pages of his little volume, and reading the affecting death scene of the malefactor on the cross:—"Here was a man, who, until the hour that he stood on the brink of eternity, had never so much as wept one tear of penitence, or breathed one prayer for mercy. And yet *he*, who was denounced by a human tribunal, as too guilty to tread the soil of earth, was pronounced by his dying Lord, as not too guilty to tread the soil of heaven. He had only to breathe the prayer of faith, 'Lord, remember me;' and that day, that hour, he was with Jesus in paradise!"

"Hush, my son; thou wouldst fain delude me with dreams of bliss, and visions of hope, that would know no fruition. I must bear the cross, ere I can wear the crown. Heaven is not the easy conquest thou supposest. The gate of paradise is flung open, to a spirit stained with such guilt as mine, only through the fires of purification. Nay, nay," said he, rising, and a deeper cloud of agoniz-

ing remorse darkening his brow, "the vesper bell shall never find that scourge at rest, until the body it lacerates, be the tenant of a darker and gloomier mansion !"

With these words he left Herbert for a few minutes alone, to breathe a silent prayer to God, to guide this unhappy man in the way of peace. He soon returned, bearing in a wooden trencher some food to break his long fast, although sorrow and fatigue had almost made him forget, that it was nearly twenty-four hours since he had taken any refreshment.

"Our monastery," said the monk, "does not boast of the luxuries of life. The holy inmates seek no more than what is needful for the sustenance of the outer tabernacle, and give no countenance to the pampering of the flesh. But see that thou fortify thy stomach well for the fatigues of another journey, with such refreshment as we can offer, for by the rules of our holy order, it behoves that ye take your departure early on the morrow. Thy presence here is not altogether unattended with danger ; but I have made arrangements to accompany thee and thy sister to the confines of Geneva, where ye will find hundreds of your fellow-exiles to bid you welcome, and open to you a kinder door than ye have found at the Grande Chartreuse."

“Talk not so, my generous benefactor,” said Herbert. “To *thee* we owe a debt of gratitude, which I trust this heart duly estimates, but which I feel it can never repay. But prythee, father, hast thou inquired how Alice has stood the fatigues of her journey ; how has she slept ?”

“As well as thyself, boy,” answered he ; “and has found in our holy sister, as I anticipated, more a mother than a stranger. Her sleep, however, has been disturbed with dreams of bloody effigies and apparitions. The scenes of the last week (I wonder not at it) have been haunting her brain : her shrieks and cries were distinctly heard by some of the holy fathers at their midnight prayers ; and this, among other considerations, urges the necessity of your departure, as I dread lest these midnight frenzies should reveal secrets, which would make this night my last within these walls !”

He placed before Herbert a plate of goat’s flesh, some curd, a piece of coarse bread, some fruits gathered from the neighbouring mountains, lettuce and water. He scantily shared in the latter two with his young companion ; and when the frugal meal was ended, he besought him to make an effort to obtain more repose, as it would be needful for their safety to depart that night, so soon as the vespers were concluded.

The kind father, having faithfully promised to

return in due time, to rouse him for his journey, left him once more to the silence of his chamber, while he himself went to make the requisite preparations for their route.

“Alas!” said Herbert, as the door closed on his generous benefactor; “kind, but deluded friend; a heart overflowing with compassion, and deeply susceptible of sympathy, but, like the maniac in the tombs, going about ‘seeking rest, and finding none!’ looking amid the polluted streams of earth, the broken cisterns of nature, for what is to be found only at a nobler fountain. Oh, that I might be instrumental in guiding him to that peace, which he will search for in vain within the walls of this dungeon! But stay,” said he, springing from his couch—some pleasing idea flashing across his mind; “I shall venture on the experiment. Yes! it is to Heaven I owe the suggestion, and in Heaven’s strength I shall make the attempt, be the issue what it may, a judgment day only can reveal.” He put his hand in his cloak pocket, and drew forth a Bible—the earliest and most valued gift of his father, but which had now been superseded by one still dearer. This he resolved to conceal in some corner of the cell, and either leave it to God to discover it to its inmate, or else take an opportunity of apprizing him of the circumstance in the course of their journey. After

searching, he found some rude writing materials, with which he wrote on the first leaf, a selection of passages which he thought most appropriate to the state of mind of his benefactor. He headed the list in larger characters than the rest, with that touchingly simple gospel antidote to the guilty soul, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and concluded with an earnest and affectionate exhortation, prayerfully to peruse its contents. Herbert hurried with this precious token of his gratitude to the couch where the monk slept. He placed the little volume under the bricks which he used for his pillow; and, scattering the straw into the same disordered condition in which he found it, committed his enterprise to Him "who turneth the heart of man, even as he turneth the rivers of water!"

It was eleven o'clock when the monk re-entered his cell, and found Herbert fast asleep. The boy started up at the sound of the good father's voice. "It is still an hour," said he, "ere we can leave. The midnight bell is only about to toll, but I called thee thus soon, that thou mightest, if thou please, accompany me to vespers. I will place thee where thy presence will not be discovered; and these midnight devotions may be profitable to thy soul, as I trust they will prove to mine, ere we prosecute our journey."

Herbert, four days ago, would have recoiled at the very idea of being an auditor in such a place ; but he thought, at the present moment, a refusal would have betrayed a bigotry to his own opinions, which would have militated much against the success of the little scheme, which, a few hours ago, he had left in the hands of Providence,. Besides, he was curious to be the eye-witness of one of the ceremonials of the Romish church ; and notwithstanding the mass of mummary and superstition which he was prepared to witness, he thought he could confide in the sincerity at least, of these pious, though deluded ascetics. Mustering courage, therefore, he gave his assent, and followed in silence the footsteps of his conductor. After ascending a flight of steps, he was led through a succession of long arched passages. In the centre of one of these, was a low door, by which the monk whispered to him to enter. " You will find," said he, " a narrow trap stair, which will conduct you to a gallery overlooking the chapel ; there, await my return at the termination of the service."

Strange and thrilling were the sensations with which the boy seated himself alone in this solitary place. He could see nothing around him but the indistinct outline of massive arches, dimly shone upon by the moonbeams, which a cloudier sky, and thicker atmosphere, had shorn of much of the

strength they had exhibited the preceding night. Seven or eight dim, sickly tapers, were burning at the upper end of the chapel, only sufficient to disclose a large gilded crucifix which surmounted the altar. Herbert sat motionless for many minutes, before a single breath disturbed the solemn stillness that reigned around him, and which would have led one to suppose it rather a place for the dead, than for living worshippers. At length, the low measured tones of the midnight bell, broke the silence of the hour. The door under the gallery opened, and the fathers assembled one by one. They first crossed themselves with the consecrated water, and after slowly pacing up the chapel with a dim lantern in their hands, sunk on their knees before the figure already mentioned—touching the cold pavement with their foreheads, and then returned each to his appropriated seat. This being done, they commenced chanting their vesper hymns; and from the mournful, lugubrious strains in which they uttered them, Herbert thought he could almost read the inward disquietude which reigned in the bosoms of the deluded votaries. An aged father stood in front of the altar, with a massive silver chain round his body, at the end of which was suspended a censer of incense, which he continued at stated intervals to wave before the object of adoration.

For a full hour the worshippers continued their mournful confessions. At length the convent bell gave one solitary toll, the signal of a new day, and of the close of their devotions. They rose, and paced in silent procession, like so many spectres, along the passage, towards the door by which they entered, and immediately all was again silent as death. In a few minutes, Herbert heard the voice of Father Bernard. "Haste thee, my child," said he, "the mules wait us at the door, ready for our departure; speak not a word, but silently follow me." So saying, they stole softly along the passage by which they had entered, and obtained a readier outlet at the convent gate than they had received admission.

Herbert found Alice already seated on the patient animal that had borne her so well through the previous part of her journey, and which pawed the ground, as if to assure his burden of his readiness for farther service, notwithstanding the fatigues of the past. Herbert had only time to press, first the hand of his dear sister, in token of his joy at being again at the side; and then that of the old lady who still held her bridle, whispering into her ear a heartfelt expression of gratitude for her kindness, when the little cavalcade was once more in motion.

After four days and a half of fatiguing journey

through many a desolate glen, and across many a bleak and barren mountain path, where they encountered perils and difficulties which it would encroach on the sequel of our story to enumerate, the travellers had reached a gentle eminence, immediately under the rugged peaks of the Jura range, overlooking a panorama of wonders, to this day the admiration of every traveller. The mist, that had till now obscured the landscape, rose like a curtain from their feet—the glorious orb of day had risen high in the firmament, and was pouring a flood of glory over rock and meadow, plain and mountain—his rays seemed to have metamorphosed into molten gold the broad expanse of water which lay sleeping in unruffled stillness at their feet, and the beautiful villas that lined its banks were mirrored in a thousand reflections in the glassy waters. A magnificent Alp soared majestically in the distance above the rest of the landscape, and appeared to the eyes of Herbert and Alice, a giant to any of their native mountains, the guardian spirit of a scene which seemed rather to have been conjured up by the wand of an enchanter, than to wear the “sober livery” of nature. The bells of a cathedral, whose towers peeped above the valley below, were pealing their melodious chimes over this fairy domain; and when, a few steps farther on, they beheld the smoke and heard the distant

hum of a busy city, they had no difficulty in discovering that they were about to enter the gates of lovely, Protestant GENEVA!

“Here we must stop,” said the monk; “safety forbids that I go farther—but ye will find hundreds within yonder gates, ready to welcome you, and to impart better counsels and abler assistance than a secluded monk. Farewell, then,” said he, the tear starting in his eye, “farewell; may the God of your fathers guide you in peace! I have an interest in your welfare, which you know not of; there is a tie which binds you to my soul, which is shared by no other who breathes the air of this polluted world.”

The grateful children embraced their kind deliverer, and loaded him with many assurances of the depth and sincerity of their gratitude. He was just about to leave, when Herbert once more addressed him. “Dear father,” said the boy, “thy kindness has indeed been like that of a parent, and I feel at this moment all the bitterness of being for a second time orphaned; but never shall this head repose on its nightly pillow, without sending up a prayer of gratitude to Heaven for having sent us such a benefactor, and a prayer for that benefactor’s eternal weal; thy kindness will not pass unnoticed nor unrewarded by Him who hath said, that ‘whosoever shall give even a cup

of cold water to a disciple, shall not lose his reward.' Although thy love," continued he, "admits of no earthly remuneration, even had it been mine to give, yet I was unwilling to quit thy humble cell, without leaving behind me some token of my gratitude, some memorial of my affection. It so happened, that I had in my possession, one little gem, whose value I will leave to thyself to estimate. When thou returnest to thy chamber, remove the bricks thou hast placed for a pillow to thy couch, and underneath thou wilt find this 'pearl of great price,' brighter far than ever glittered on mitred heads, or in kingly diadems."

"Thy gift, my child," said the monk, "thou mightest better have bestowed on those who are still enamoured with the tinsel glitter of the world's vanities. The brightest and costliest of earthly gems, are utterly valueless to one whose worldly desires and prospects are now bounded by the walls of his cloister; but I feel, and duly appreciate the motive which has induced thy kindness, and I shall preserve it for thy sake. Farewell—farewell!" With these words, they each took their different paths—the monk, with his docile charge, to the valleys of Dauphiny—the young Vaudois to the city, which formed a temporary rendezvous for many of their exiled countrymen.

CHAPTER III.

In vain the little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
With tears of artless innocence—alas !
Nor wife nor children, more shall he behold,
Nor friends nor sacred home ! On ev'ry nerve
The deadly winter seizes—shuts up sense,
And o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows—a stiffen'd corse
Stretch'd out and bleaching in the northern blast !

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

SCARCE an hour had elapsed, since parting with their kind conductor, when our young fugitives had arrived at the western gate of Geneva. They crossed by a draw-bridge the deep moat which surrounds the city, and which is fed by the waters of the Rhone; and the sentinel who paced in front of the massive archway contented himself with bestowing a passing glance on the strangers, and permitted them to enter unchallenged.

Had it been at any other time, the novel sight of a bustling town, and particularly one ennobled by so many hallowed associations, would not have been thrown away, on such minds as those of Herbert and his sister. They had often listened

with delight to the noble struggles which Geneva had made for civil and religious liberty, recounted at the fireside of their father's dwelling. And their young and ardent imaginations would have rejoiced to linger in a place consecrated by so many illustrious dead. But other and gloomier thoughts, now occupied their bosoms. They were exiled wanderers—in a land of strangers—torn from the embrace of their dearest friends—severed from the land of their birth, with a dreary world and a dark futurity before them. With dejected hearts, they wound their way through the streets—a solemn stillness reigned around—and they rejoiced to find, that there were other spots, besides their own valleys, where the God of the Sabbath received the homage due to him, on that day of sacred rest, which he had peculiarly set apart as his own.

The dress and appearance of the young orphans—unlike that of their unhappy fellow exiles, who had been subjected, in the course of their journey, to the endurance of evils from which, by a kind providence, they had been happily exempted—did not reveal them to be fellow-sufferers, else a hundred arms would have been out-stretched to welcome them, the moment they entered the city. The compassion manifested by the Genevese to these wretched wanderers, affords a pleasing relief

to the mind, in the midst of the contemplation of their aggravated sufferings. Crowds of the inhabitants flocked daily to the bridge of the Arve, to conduct the fugitives to the comfort and shelter of a home. And hard indeed must that heart have been, which could refuse to be melted at the spectacle of wretchedness which was there disclosed. Some arrived at the gates of this "city of refuge" only to expire! Some sunk exhausted in the arms of their protectors—the tongues of others were benumbed with cold, so that they were unable to speak—not a few were half naked and covered with disease—the hands fell paralysed, which were stretched out to receive proffered charity; and what was more dreaded still—few there were who had not left behind them beloved relatives to perish in the snow, and be the food of wild beasts! Eighty-six in a single company, were engulfed by a tempest on Mont Cenis, in one living tomb; and it is recorded of some merchants, who afterwards crossed the mountain, that they saw the bodies of the unhappy mothers, preserved by the intense cold, still clasping their babes in their arms!

But to return. The young fugitives, in obedience to the directions of the monk, bent their steps towards the cathedral, within whose walls they deemed it more than probable they should find some of their countrymen, holding communion with

the God of their fathers. As they wound their way up a steep lane, over-arched by the projecting houses, the ear of Alice caught the faint melody of a number of voices above. The sounds seemed familiar to her—and yet, from the change of scene, and the many conflicting emotions that were then agitating her bosom, it was many minutes before she recognized a hymn of her native valleys, and one which had often cheered her suffering forefathers in the hour of persecution. With hearts overflowing with joy and gratitude towards that God who had proved himself once more, as in all their past afflictions, to be “a present help in trouble,” they eagerly mounted the narrow stair, which conducted them to this conventicle. In an instant they reached the door. Herbert had his hand on the lock, ready to throw himself in the embrace of his friends, but he thought it advisable to repress his feelings for a little, and continue a listener, until the worshippers had concluded their devotions.

It is only those, who know, from experience, what it is for the orphaned—friendless—exiled—to be welcomed once more to the embrace of long-lost relatives, who can appreciate the feelings with which the fatherless children of Rodolph Vinçon listened to the voices of their exiled brethren, as in sweet concert they sung the following verses:—

From our homes and altars driven,
Doom'd to roam, an exiled race,
Still we lift our eyes to Heaven,
Lord, be thou our dwelling place !

What though earthly joys forsake us,
Sever'd from the friends we love,
The hour is nigh, that shall awake us,
To the endless joys above !

Martyr'd spirits ! gone before us,
Noblest of the heavenly throng,
Soon we hope to join your chorus,
Share your crown, and swell your song !

Then "all sorrow and all sighing,
Shall for ever flee away,"
Tears exchang'd for bliss undying,
Darkness, for eternal day !

When the hymn was concluded, Herbert could no longer forbear. He opened the door of the humble apartment. In a moment the orphans were in the embraces of their beloved friends, unable for a time to utter a word, amid the mingled tears of joy and sorrow. The "small upper room," in which, like the apostles of old, this persecuted remnant had met for secret communion, contained about a dozen individuals, varying in age, but all possessing the common characteristic of being the children of suffering and sorrow,—on whom famine and disease had left the trace of

their ravages, and were hurrying not a few to the grave. Herbert and Alice rejoiced to find that many of the dearest and most valued friends of their childhood, had been spared to be the comforters and companions of their exile.

There was one of their number, however, whose presence kindled, in the hearts of our young fugitives, a glow of intense delight,—one, who had been their father's unwearied friend in his adversity as well as prosperity, in his sorrows as well as his joys,—on whom the venerable patriarch had leaned as a counsellor in his declining years, and who, by his affectionate kindness and exalted piety, had contributed much in binding up the wounds of a spirit that bled under deeper and more poignant sorrows, than often fall to the lot of humanity to experience. He was a man who had reached the prime of life, whose muscular frame, manly countenance, and dark penetrating eye, under the disadvantages of a poor and humble attire, bespoke something far above the average of human character. The same cloud of sorrow, which was seated on the faces of his companions, mantled his lofty brow,—and yet, withal, there was a bland resignation in his countenance, which told at once whence he looked for an antidote to his afflictions, and a permanent resting place from the troubles and the trials of an agitated world.

Such was Henri Arnaud,—the peasant hero of a hundred battles,—one of those champions that appear from time to time on the theatre of the church,—appointed by its Great Head for the vindication of his own cause, and the delivery of his oppressed people,—and who was destined shortly to be the leader of an achievement, to which the muse of history, though she has almost left it unrecorded, can adduce no parallel.

Close at his side, there sat a young man, with a younger sister, bearing a striking resemblance to him we have described. Ferdinand and Julia Arnaud were the orphan children of his deceased brother, who had been deprived of maternal as well as paternal care in their infancy, and had been consigned to the guardianship of the future deliverer of his race. They had been the intimate companions of Herbert and Alice from their earliest childhood,—they had sat together in the same village school,—they had shared its hours of innocent recreation,—and the happiest moments of their lives had been spent in climbing together the sylvan heights of Villar or Angrogna,—in gathering the wild fruits or flowers of the mountain,—or in following the goats in their rocky paths. It may be imagined, therefore, what the feelings of both must have been, when they found themselves once more, united in adversity, as they had for-

merly been in prosperity,—mutual soothers and comforters of each other's sorrows,—as they had formerly been helpers together of each other's joys.

“Welcome, welcome, my beloved children,” said Arnaud, as, with a gush of parental tenderness, he locked by turns the wanderers in his arms, and pressed their cheeks with his lips. “A gracious God has heard our prayers, and disappointed our fears. But—but—” continued he, his tongue faltering as he struggled to ascertain the melancholy truth, which his deep emotion shewed he fully anticipated,—“where—where is——.”

“I know, I know,” replied Herbert, the tears rolling profusely down his cheek:—“He is safe, though in no earthly tenement; the Alpine snows are the home of his body,—heaven that of his spirit! His sufferings are now at an end, and his sepulchre, though one of rude stones, is not in a land of exile, but within sight of his native valleys, almost within hearing of his own Sabbath-bell!”

“Rodolph Vinçon in a cold grave!” exclaimed Arnaud, fetching a sigh from the lowest depths of his bosom,—his lips quivering as he spoke. “Had the ruthless foe no pity on his grey locks and furrowed brow? Did the serene and heavenly lustre of his eye not kindle a glow of sympathy in the iron-hearted oppressors? But God's will

be done. His way and his will are always the best. ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed for ever be the name of the Lord!’ Be comforted, be comforted, my beloved child,” said he, turning to Alice, whose wounded heart was now bleeding afresh; “dry up these tears of unavailing sorrow. ‘Weep not; he is not dead, but sleepeth.’ Yea, weep not; he is not dead, but liveth! God’s way often seems to be ‘in the sea, and his path in the deep waters, and his judgments unsearchable;’ but we know that all his dealings are dictated by unerring wisdom and unchangeable love; and where we cannot trace, let us trust! ‘Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning;’ that blessed morning, when the unfolding of the roll of providence will put to silence every murmur, explain every mystery, and bring every tongue to confess, that the ‘Lord was righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works!’”

“Yes,” said Herbert, taking up the pious strain of his affectionate friend, “we *are* in the hands of a ‘God of love,’ who has a ‘need be’ in every chastisement; nay, whose afflictions are blessings in disguise, and who has pledged his own word, that he ‘afflicts not willingly.’ The sad bereavement we now deplore, is doubtless one of the ‘all things’ that work together for good to them

that love Him, designed to lead our hearts up from the creature to the Creator,—from earth to Heaven,—from time to eternity !”

“Dearest boy,” said Arnaud, “thou hast betaken thyself to the only refuge that can avail thee in such an hour as this ; and thou wilt find resignation to the divine will, the softest pillow upon which thou canst repose. Full well do I know, how hard it is, for the rebellious spirit, meekly to acquiesce in the rectitude of Jehovah’s dealings, to kiss the rod that smites, and adore the hand which lays low ! But ‘He that spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up to the death for us all ; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?’ Yes, my children, lift your eyes to the cross of Christ, and every doubt must be removed,—every repining silenced,—every murmur overborne ; for, one glance *there*, will read to you the utter impossibility of God’s withholding any requisite blessing within the compass of Omnipotence to bestow, or sending one trial that is unneeded,—one affliction that might be spared ! You are bereaved of the kindest and most affectionate of earthly parents ; but, remember the parting promise of Him who said, ‘*I will not leave you orphans—I will come unto you.*’”

“And our heavenly Father,” said Herbert,

“has shewn us, that ‘he is not slack concerning his promises.’ In the very depth of our extremity, He made himself known as the ‘shield of the stranger, and the stay of the orphans;’ and gave us to experience the truth of the Psalmist’s declaration, ‘When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up!’”

Here Herbert minutely detailed the wonderful interposition of an overruling Providence, in providing for them, in the bitterest hour of their sorrow, a friend and protector, who had guided them in safety through perils and dangers which they themselves could not possibly have surmounted.

The little group listened with intense interest to the touching narrative; lifting up at intervals their hearts in devout thankfulness to Him, whose hand was so strikingly visible in the rescue of the orphans.

Arnaud, in his turn, recounted the fearful combination of dangers and cruelties which he and his fellow-exiles had encountered on their Alpine journey; willing to endure every thing, rather than submit to purchase immunity from suffering, by doing homage at the altars of their antichristian oppressors. Many of his surviving companions, had, two days before, proceeded to the interior of Switzerland, while he and the little remnant, who

continued at Geneva, had purposely delayed, in hopes of hearing some tidings of their venerated friend.

He was desirous, if possible, of prosecuting his route on the morrow, in expectation of finding a permanent residence for the winter among the Protestant valleys of Berne; or if not, that they might proceed, before the rigours of the season increased, to the duchy of Brandenburg or some other part of Germany, where a safe asylum had been thrown open to the persecuted Protestants.

Besides, he was unwilling to widen the distance between the place of his exile and his native valleys; as, even at that dark moment, there slumbered in the bosom of this brave man, the embryo of the enterprise, which he was one day destined so gloriously to achieve. When they had each concluded the narrative of their sufferings, and once more united together in offering the thanksgiving of grateful hearts to their common Father, the little band dispersed to their respective residences, to permit their two young friends to enjoy some refreshment after the fatigues of the preceding night, and that they might all be in readiness, at the appointed hour in the morning, for again setting out on their wanderings.

The dawn of day found the remnant of the Waldensian exiles gliding along the deep blue

waters of lake Leman. The facilities of travelling were not then equal to those of the nineteenth century. The miracles of Watt had not yet brought Geneva within a few hours' distance of the other end of the lake; nor had Napoleon, the "imperial road-maker," left the trophies of his power on the Alpine barriers of Switzerland. The whole of the first day was occupied in traversing the lake. But the time was not allowed by Arnaud to pass unprofitably away—every object of inanimate nature, from the countless combinations around, seemed to minister to his reflecting mind motives of resignation, and grounds of consolation and hope. If he saw his desponding companions sinking under gloomy anticipations of the future, he would point to the loveliness of the landscape around,—the smiling plains and crowning vintage,—the verdant pastures and varied enamel of the mountain sides, as pledges and assurances, that "if God so clothe the grass of the field," much more will he throw the arm of protection over his defenceless children. Or, again, he would point to the everlasting mountains, as the emblems, which He himself has selected, of the perpetuity of his love, when he assures his disconsolate people, that sooner shall "the mountains depart and the hills be removed, than his kindness be taken from them, or the covenant of his peace removed!" As

they passed the solitary towers of Chillon, he reminded them of those who had been immured for the cause of truth within its dark dungeons, and from *their* endurance of suffering, which issued in the ultimate triumph of their cause, he read to his companions the lesson of patience under their present tribulations, and inspired them with the hope that God would yet, in his own good time and way, “turn again their captivity.”

“See,” said he, as they reached the termination of the lake, and beheld the Rhone rolling his rapid flood into its calm bosom, “how dark! how turgid these sullen waters! how different from those we this morning beheld, emerging from the lake, in which there was not one foul spot to bedim their transparent loveliness! and yet they are the waters of one and the same stream. They enter muddy and polluted,—they come forth pure as crystal! Is it not even so with God’s dealings with his people? He afflicts, only to purify! he causes ‘his waves and his billows to roll over us,’ only that we may be freed from our pollutions, washed of our defilements, and come out purer and holier than before. We enter, soiled and darkened with the ingredients of earth; we emerge, reflecting the image of heaven! Oh, yes!” continued he, “let us acknowledge the rectitude of Jehovah’s dealings in the midst of our present

trials: ‘Many waters may have come into our souls;’ ‘the floods may have lifted up their voice, the floods may have lifted up their waves;’ ‘but the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters.’ For years to come, we may be doomed to sit in sackcloth, and pine in captivity. But it will not be always so,—‘God will yet arise and have mercy upon our Zion;’ and cause us, like yonder river, to emerge from the billows of persecution, with purer hearts and more ardent love, to uprear the altars of truth in the land of our fathers!”

We shall not attempt to follow the little band through their tedious journey, or enumerate the difficulties they had to encounter in a land in which they were strangers. To facilitate their chance of obtaining a permanent dwelling, they thought it prudent to divide into separate companies;—the greater number proceeding in the direction of Thun, and the neighbouring villages; while Arnaud, Ferdinand, and Julia, along with our two young orphans, directed their steps by a nearer road to the village of Lauterbrunnen.

It was on the evening of the sixth day, from their leaving Geneva, that the five pilgrim wanderers were wending their way along one of those peaceful and secluded valleys in the Bernese Oberlands, which are surrounded by the snow-white summits of the Wéngern, the Jungfrau, and the

Schreckhorn. By an attempt to shorten the leagues which intervened between them and the place of their intended lodgment for the night, they had missed their path, and the shadows of evening were beginning to fall before they had time to retrace their steps. Arnaud looked around, in vain, to discover some habitation in this desolate spot ; but he resolved once more, in the midst of his perplexity, to cast himself on the kind Providence that had so wonderfully sustained them in the past ; and it was not long before the experience of the Psalmist was made their own : “ They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way,—they found no habitation to dwell in ; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them ; then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses !” They had proceeded only a few steps, when, on the slope of the opposite hill, at the bottom of a thick forest of pines, the eye of Arnaud was attracted by a glimmering light in a lonely chalet ; thither he resolved, at once, to bend his steps, and throw himself and his friends for the night on the hospitality of its inmates.

This humble abode, whose wicket-gate they speedily reached, appeared to be the solitary occupant of the valley. Even in their exhausted state, and with the twilight glimpse they obtained, the

young people could not help admiring the simple beauty of its architecture,—its wooden walls, composed of small blocks of fir transversely cut,—its rustic windows, almost hid from view with honeysuckle, ivy, and jasmine,—its projecting roof, supported by pillars of native pine,—and the tasteful garden, with its perennial fountain, which bubbled up at the foot of an aged tree, and murmured down into the valley below. It is not unusual, in the Swiss cottages, to have a sentiment or inscription carved above the entrance or doorway; and from these external mottos, the character of the inmates may frequently be inferred. If Arnaud approached this humble chalet with a tremulous heart, apprehensive lest his request might be met with a negative; it may be imagined how emboldened he was, in demanding admittance, when he cast his eyes on the rude letters which surmounted the portico, and read the invitation of the pious Syrian: “Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?”

His first knock was answered by the bark of a dog, followed by a voice, apparently that of a female, who demanded, from within, the errand of the strangers. “A few unhappy exiles,” was the reply, “from the Protestant valleys of Piedmont, who have been driven from their native hearths for their attachment to the faith of their fathers, and who having

deviated from their path, seek to claim for a single night the Christian hospitality of those within ; or, if that be impossible, to obtain direction in recovering their lost road."

The door was immediately opened, and a woman, past the middle of life, welcomed the strangers. The interior of the cottage was such as was to be expected from its external aspect;—the furniture was of the simplest description,—the walls were decorated with some trophies of the chase,—a few books were scattered on the shelves of a rustic cupboard, the largest of which had found its way into the hands of the only other tenant of the cot, who was seated by the side of a blazing fire, and drinking in, from the well-worn pages of the volume, those eternal truths which time cannot impair. He was arrayed in a shepherd's garb, and, from the grey hairs that mingled with the auburn locks which fell over his shoulders, appeared to have passed considerably the prime of manhood. He had just finished his frugal meal, and its remains had been consigned to the faithful companion of his mountain toils, who was too intensely occupied with this well-earned recompense of his day's labours, to signify his acquiescence in the kind welcome which had been bestowed on the travellers.

Arnaud did not require to be long in the com-

pany of this frugal pair, before he was able to discover, that though to him entire strangers, they were related by a nobler and more enduring than any earthly bond.

Albert and Mariette Peyrani, were two of the many Christian peasants who are still to be found among the lonely mountains and valleys of Switzerland, who, uncontaminated by the fashions of the world, spend their simple lives between their flocks and their God ; and to whom the want of the society of earth, is more than compensated by a nearer and more intimate communion with Heaven.

Such refreshment as they possessed, was spread by the kind shepherdess before her exhausted guests. Her husband listened with devout interest to the affecting story of Arnaud regarding his persecuted race,—the more so, as, from a reference to the genealogical leaf of his Bible, he shewed his own descent from a Waldensian ancestry ;—their deeds of heroism had often been recounted to him in his childhood, from the lips of his father,—often had they formed the subject of his lonely meditations, while tending his flock on the mountain side ; and one of the few objects of ambition which dwelt in the heart of the shepherd of Lauterbrunnen, was the desire of making a pil-

grimace to these secluded valleys, and of beholding, with his own eyes, the spots which had been watered with the blood of his sires.

Not many days had been spent at the little cottage, before the hearts of the strangers became so knit to one another, that, at the earnest solicitation of their pious hosts, the fugitives resolved to make the chalet of Lauterbrunnen their home. The adjoining forest contributed some of its noblest treasures to add to its accommodation; and the exiles seemed, for a while at least, to forget their misfortunes and the gloomy themes which had haunted them for weeks past, as they busied themselves in preparation for their winter dwelling. Month after month rolled away, and time only served to increase the gratitude of the wanderers to an overruling Providence, for having directed their steps to so tranquil an abode. Morning and evening, the hymn of praise rose from its walls; and had Arnaud been animated by no higher principle than his own comfort and that of his family, Villar and Angrogna would probably have been forgotten amid the loveliness of this little paradise, and the Christian sympathies of its primitive inhabitants. But his own noble nature, no less than his religion, taught him to look beyond self, and the narrow sphere of personal interests. He could not forget that there were hun-

dreds still pining in the dungeons of Sardinia, —many fellow exiles still wandering without a home,—and what was more galling still, the light of truth, which had burned with unsullied lustre, through a past millenium, on their native altars, was now quenched and extinguished by the horrors of papal darkness ! His patriotic spirit could not brook the thought of remaining in selfish unconcern, a passive spectator of the aggravated wrongs of his race, without making a single effort to vindicate their cause, and rescue them from their unjust and cruel oppression.

Accordingly, in the spring of the following year, Arnaud absented himself for a little from the peace of his mountain home, and, in company with Captain Besson of La Tour, a brother in exile, visited the fugitives who were scattered in Germany and Holland, and provided for those who were still in destitution. After having completed their benevolent pilgrimage, they resolved, before returning to the valleys of Switzerland, to lay the subject of their grievances at the feet of the king of Holland.

William, Prince of Orange, was at that time residing at his palace at the Hague. If he did not stand alone among the monarchs of Europe, as the defender of the oppressed Protestants, he at least proved himself, since the death of the Protector of England, to be their most sincere and

zealous, as well as their most powerful intercessor. His compassion for the sufferers was increased, by his hatred of the perfidy of him who was the author of their wrongs; and to humble the haughty spirit, and curb the intolerant ambition of Louis of France, formed his reigning passion. That his sympathy for the persecuted, however, and his hostility to the persecutor, were dictated by a nobler and purer motive than the desire of humbling a rival, is evident from his faithful and unflinching adherence to their cause, when prosperity had placed him beyond the intrigues of those of whom he was formerly jealous, by adding to his hereditary dominions the royal sceptre of England.

Seldom did he listen to the tale of suffering with such deep emotion, as to that of Arnaud and his companion regarding their countrymen. Often had he desired to learn more of the history of the extraordinary race, which, for a succession of ages, had braved undaunted the storms of persecution; and as the humble mountaineer recounted, in his hearing, the merciless cruelties and sanguinary horrors that had attended their late exile, chords of sympathy were touched in the royal bosom, which never vibrated before. He exhorted them to a patient endurance of their present wrongs, and encouraged them in the hope of being restored ere long to their ancient possessions.

A portion of his own territories was appropriated to those of the fugitives who were still without a home; and Arnaud was liberally furnished with money for the supply of the more urgent necessities of his brethren. William took an accurate memorandum of his interview with the representatives of the innocent race; and, on his subsequent exaltation to the throne of Britain, shewed the sincerity of his repeated assurances of favour, by renewing the munificent benefaction originally granted by Cromwell from the national treasury, "for the assistance and relief of the suffering Protestants of Piedmont."*

But we must now pass over the events of several succeeding months, and present our readers with a change of scene.

* See Appendix, Note C.

CHAPTER IV.

————— They lived unknown,
Till persecution dragged them into fame,
And chased them up to heaven. Their ashes flew,
No marble tells us whither. With their names
No bard embalms and sanctifies his song,
And history, so warm on other themes,
Is cold on this !

COWPER.

ON the 16th of August, 1689, in the depths of a forest, which stretched along the shores of Lake Lemman, between Nion and Rolle, a band of intrepid adventurers had mustered together at nightfall. Their place of rendezvous was a dell, in the centre of this secluded retreat, surrounded by a dense covering of copse and brushwood, whose silence was disturbed, only by the murmuring of a little stream, which gurgled through the valley. The moonbeams, which struggled through the thick branches of the surrounding pines, disclosed partial glimpses of the persons and countenances of those, who composed this nocturnal assemblage. On the fragment of a rock that stemmed the current of the rivulet, stood an individual, muffled in a coarse martial cloak. On

either side of him, reclined two athletic figures; each holding a flambeau in his hand, which threw a lurid glare on the swarthy countenance of the speaker. His raven locks hung in confusion over his shoulders; and his eye kindled into lustre, as he addressed the listening throng, who seemed, at every sentence, to imbibe the same enthusiasm, which animated their leader.

Need we say, that this midnight convocation, was composed of the scattered remnant of the exiled Waldenses,—sighing to return once more to their native hearths; with their intrepid champion, the patriotic, the dauntless, the pious, Henri Arnaud!

For nearly two years, they had enjoyed, amid the sequestered retreats and villages of Switzerland, a respite from the sword of persecution; and their brethren of a common faith, seemed to rival one another in compassionating the fugitives, soothing their sorrows, relieving their sufferings, and binding up the wounds which the loss of friends, and the cruelty of foes, had inflicted.

But the kindness of friends, the hospitality of strangers, and the free toleration of their religion, could not atone for the want of their native homes. The bleak mountains of Jura, or even the gigantic Alps of Berne, had to them no grandeur, when compared with the savage wonders of Pragelas or St Martin. Geneva, with its verdant banks, its

rich plains, and varied loveliness, had in their eyes nothing attractive, when they thought of the vines, and pasturages, and grassy meads, of Villar or Angrogna. The massive towers of its cathedral, bore no aspect half so beautiful, as the lowly roof of their mountain "temples."* The deep tones of its organ, and the solemn chimes of its Sabbath bell, were music that seemed tame in their ears, when they thought of the sweet and artless melody, which rose from the sanctuaries of their fathers.

And besides the thought of their own exile, their blood ran cold, while they remembered that "the holy and beautiful houses, where they and their fathers worshipped," were now made the temples of antichrist; their lowly altars laid waste; and the idolatrous pageantry of Rome, planted in their stead! The lofty spirits of these mountaineers, could endure personal suffering and degradation, but they could not brook the thought of sacrilegious rites, and popish ceremonies, polluting the spots that were hallowed by all that was dear to them. They resolved on death, rather than stand tamely by, to be the silent spectators of the outrage. The martial spirit of Arnaud had kindled the flame. It spread with the rapidity of a conflagration. "Death or our hearths!" was the cry

* The name by which the Waldenses designate their churches.

that burst from a thousand hearts; who vowed with uplifted hands, that their sabres should not return to their scabbards, till they had plucked the standards of the Romish faith from their altars, and caused the banner of truth, again to wave on their mountain strongholds!

Their prudence, however, was not, at first, equal to their enthusiasm: twice had they already attempted to rally their little squadron, and march, sword in hand, to their native valleys; but on both occasions they had been defeated by the vigilance of their foes, and compelled to abandon the enterprise. One unhappy consequence resulting from the failure, was the strengthening of the Savoyard troops that guarded the frontier; thus adding to the difficulties of a successful return.

But disappointments and difficulties, could not shake the faith of those, who knew that their swords were drawn in a righteous cause. They felt confident, that the Lord of Hosts was on their side, and would crown their faithful legion with victory; and that if they fell, their martyred blood should not crimson the snows of the mountain, unnoticed, or unrecorded, in the book of Heaven!

Add to this, they now possessed, what on the two former occasions was wanting, a leader, on whose matured experience and sound judgment, they

could thoroughly rely. Arnaud was one of those uncommon characters, who have from time to time appeared in the world, suited to the peculiar exigencies of the times; and combining with the nobler graces of the Christian, fortitude, ardour, and indomitable perseverance. A meek child of God at the domestic hearth; a dauntless champion in the hour of danger; preferring for the nurture of his spiritual graces, the quiet of the closet, the undisturbed peace of a sequestered life; but equally ready, if need be, to maintain his Master's cause in the tented field, in the den, or the cavern, under the gleam of the executioner's sword, or amid the flames of martyrdom. Undaunted by all the obstacles that opposed him, unmoved alike by the fears and apprehensions, the doubtings and despondings of those less courageous than himself, this intrepid hero, with a firm faith in divine assistance, put himself at the head of eight hundred ardent followers, who, cemented together as one man, were resolved to march onward either to conquer, or perish in the attempt!

In the place of rendezvous, which we have already described, the patriotic band had rallied, at the appointed time, around their champion. They had bidden a sorrowful farewell to their wives and little ones, whom they had left behind, and whose faces, few of them dreamed of ever seeing more.

Their leader knew well, that a strength and courage higher than mortal, was required to sustain their spirits in such an hour as *this*; with the prospect of a march across almost impassable mountains, and in the midst of disciplined troops. His first duty, therefore, was to lead their thoughts from earth to heaven, to implore the guidance and protection of the Eternal on their meditated enterprise; and to convince them, that with an arm of almightiness on their side, "though an host should encamp against them, their hearts need not fear."

"We must begin and end with God, devoted friends!" exclaimed Arnaud, as his strong masculine figure stood erect on the rock, unclasping, at the same time, the sacred book which had been his companion in every hour of his exile. He selected as the subject of his address, the appropriate verse, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." His exhortation, throughout, was replete with noble Christian sentiment: its simple, but persuasive eloquence, drew tears from eyes that never wept before; and sustained many a heart that was sinking at the prospect of coming danger. Often, at the conclusion of his spirit-stirring appeals, the audience sprung simultaneously from their seats, and with the clash of arms, nobly responded to the enthu-

siasm of their leader. He was especially desirous of dislodging from their minds, any motives of carnal ambition, and of impressing upon them the holiness of the cause, in which they were about to embark.

“Fear not, little flock!” were the concluding sentences of his animating address, his enthusiasm kindling into a finer flame, as he drew to a close, —“the victory is yours,—Omnipotence is on your side,—Jehovah, the God of battles, leads you on to triumph! Are we to sit tamely by, pining in a distant land, while the smoke of our burning hamlets, the moans of innocent captives, and the cries of murdered babes, are ascending to Heaven? Are we to brook the thought of our tabernacles being converted into dens of iniquity, scenes of impiety, torture, and crime? No! Let us lift our right hands, and, with this rock as an altar, solemnly swear that these arms of ours shall never abandon the struggle, until we, our wives, our children, our fathers, are restored to our domestic hearths, and the last standard of antichrist, be torn from our desecrated sanctuaries!

“Fear not, little flock, the scantiness of your numbers. Let not your hearts despond, as your imaginations conjure up the mailed legions that are waiting for your destruction! Be they as grasshoppers for multitude, ‘He that is *for* you,

is greater far than all that can be against you ;' will not he, who encouraged the faint and desponding Gideon, and strewed on the plain the myriad army of Sennacherib, and, with the blast of a trumpet, prostrated the proud walls of Jericho, and, with a pebble from the brook and a shepherd's boy, laid in the dust the champion of the Philistines ; will not *He* extend over our exiled band the banner of his protecting love, ' break all our enemies in pieces as with a rod of iron, and shiver them as a potter's vessel ?' On ! on then, to death or victory. Though, for this next winter, we should find no couch but the barren rock,—no sanctuary but the cavern,—no canopy but the sky !—on ! though the king of terrors should be already exulting over his prey, and suffering, and torture, and death be the portion that awaits us. Let us go either to our homes or the stake,—our hearths or the sepulchre ; let us win the victor's wreath or the martyr's crown !"

When the notes of this patriotic appeal had died away, and they once more had united in prayer, they forthwith commenced their perilous adventure. On emerging from the place of concealment, they seized some boats on the banks of the lake, and landed in safety on the Savoy shore ere day began to break. Here they were drawn up in martial order. Arnaud divided them into

three companies, the advanced guard, rear guard, and centre; himself heading the first, and entrusting the others to Cyrus Chion, a brother in persecution from the valleys in Dauphiny, and M. Montoux of Pragelas. These again, were subdivided into different companies, composed of the inhabitants of the respective communes in the valleys. We must not omit to mention, that the hearts of the forlorn exiles of Villar were, at this perilous moment, not a little consoled and inspirited, by seeing among them the youthful representative of the worth and piety of their venerated pastor. Herbert Vinçon and Ferdinand Arnaud, young as they were, were destined to have no inconsiderable share in the glorious triumph, which ultimately crowned the heroism of the mountaineers.

Their onward march was so fraught with marvels, peril and adventure, vicissitude and suffering, that each day would of itself furnish materials for a volume. And our readers, who are curious to trace the outcast people in their extraordinary journey, cannot do better than peruse the touching historical detail, sketched by the pen of their leader himself.*

On their first day's march, they encountered opposition at the different villages through which they

* Arnaud's "La Rentrée Glorieuse." Translated and Edited by Acland.

were obliged to pass. Various ambuscades were laid for their destruction; but their undaunted resolution struck terror into the hearts of their opponents, from whom they demanded hostages as guides, under the threat of being hanged on the nearest tree, if they acted treacherously. A more serious impediment threatened them the following day, in their passage through Cluses, a fortified town, washed by the river Arve. Its citizens flew to arms, lined the trenches, and shut the gates; meanwhile, despatching messengers to the neighbouring village of Salleuche, to apprise its inhabitants of the approach of the invaders, and urge them to dispute their passage through the narrow valley of Maglan. The exasperated Vaudois threatened that a moment's delay would sacrifice the lives of the hostages. The menace had the desired effect; the gates were reluctantly thrown open, and, ere the inhabitants of Salleuche had mustered their forces, the intrepid band had passed the defile, and rested for the night in the village of Cablau.

The rugged peaks of the Graian Alps now presented an almost insurmountable barrier. Their route lay over precipices, whose depths were concealed by wreaths of snow, and where one false step would have been enough to have hurled them into fathomless abysses; but a dense mist and torrents of rain providentially screened them from

their foes. They surmounted, under a tempestuous sky, the terrific cliffs of the Col de Bon-Homme. Intrenchments, with embrasures and counterscarps, had been hewn out of the solid rock the preceding year, and a handful of peasants could, with a few stones, have overwhelmed the whole exiles in destruction. But, providentially, these were all deserted; and, descending to the banks of the Reclus, they encamped, on the fourth evening, in the vicinity of the village of Sey.

The three following days were occupied in penetrating the gloomy valley which is watered by the Isere. They passed the town of Tigne, and crossed, amid sufferings altogether indescribable, the dreary heights of Mont Cenis. Many were left to perish in the snow, others dashed to pieces among the rocks, others bewildered among the diverging paths, and separated for ever from their comrades.

Being aware that a strong garrison was waiting to dispute their march at Susa, they preferred following the waters of the Doire, a mountain torrent that skirts the base of Mount Albin; and after many skirmishes, in which some of the bravest fell victims to their valour, they arrived within a league of Salabertrann, the narrowest part of the defile, where a bridge was thrown across the

river, and which, they were well assured, could only be crossed by a desperate struggle.

“Let us breathe here, my brave comrades!” exclaimed Arnaud, as he attained a little eminence, where he thought they might halt with impunity. “Our hardest day’s work is yet before us. See yonder heights, lighted with the beacons of the foe? Yonder, the lion is couching for his prey; but, if he pounce on the innocent sheep, who are returning to the fold of their fathers, we shall shew that ours shall not be the only blood that will crimson the mountain stream. If we perish, it is in a righteous cause. Retreat we cannot. And who would dream of an inglorious flight, when the snowy peaks of our native mountains are already bounding the horizon?” So saying, he distributed among them the few provisions which still remained; and, after they had poured out their united supplications to the God of their fathers, and sung their simple battle song, they rose with rallied strength and new resolution, to march onward to the scene of carnage.

Their worst fears were realised: 2500 troops were drawn up on an eminence on the opposite side of the bridge, and summoned them to lay down their arms. “*Qui vive?*” was shouted across as they approached. “*Friends!*” was echoed back by the

intrepid exiles, "if permission be given us to pass unmolested." The reply was the signal for an instant onset. "To slaughter! to slaughter!" was the simultaneous cry of a thousand voices. Arnaud had the sagacity to make his brave band fall prostrate on the ground; and though there was a volley of 2000 shots poured upon them, one only fell a victim to this murderous fire. A company of the enemy had now fallen upon their rear, and they saw that, without the loss of a moment, all must be hazarded. "Courage!" cried a stranger, who had lately joined their ranks, and had already distinguished himself for his intrepidity,—“the bridge is ours! the sword of the Lord and of Gideon!” With one desperate effort they cleared their way with sabre and bayonet, mowing down the disordered enemy. Hundreds were tumbled over the parapet into the swollen stream, which dashed them over its cataracts ere they could struggle to the shore! The Vaudois ascended over the heaps of slain to the fortifications of the enemy, drove the feeble remnant from their post, and, after two hours' continued struggle, "the trumpets," says Arnaud in his simple history, "were sounded, and all of them, throwing their hats towards heaven, made the air ring with the joyful acclamation, 'Thanks to the Eternal of armies, who has given us the victory!'"

Thirteen chests of ammunition were captured, and all their contents, which were likely to prove serviceable, they appropriated for their own use; the remainder was sunk in the river. "We must not rest here, my comrades," said their leader, after they had bound up the wounds of their fellow exiles, "we must not indulge in supineness after the flush of victory! We are yet in peril. The enemy may yet rally their numbers. Let us make the bold effort to forget, for another hour, our fatigues, and pursue our march; and, I promise that to-morrow's sun will disclose a spectacle which will gladden the most downcast eye, and cheer the most desponding heart!" The trumpet sounded, and the little phalanx were once more in motion; their route lay up the steep of the mountain of Sey, and the rocky path was lighted by a clear moon. Hundreds fell down from sleep and fatigue, and were saved from inevitable destruction, only by the rear guard which had been purposely left behind to urge them on. At midnight they arrived at the summit of the mountain. Here they flung themselves down on the cold rocks, with such coverings as they had, for shelter; and never was a couch more acceptable, nor repose more profound.

CHAPTER V.

Pilgrims ! the end is near :
Though faint, yet still pursue ;
When ye shall gain the mountain's brow,
A scene, beyond conception now,
Shall burst upon your view !

HOURS OF SORROW.

THE exhausted troop had scarcely enjoyed their repose for four hours, when the dawn of Sabbath-morning began to break. Arnaud opened his eyes, just as the orb of day was peeping above the horizon, and tinging the summits of the mountains with his golden beams. He enjoyed for some time the glorious prospect alone and in silence, but when wood, and rock, and forest, that had been buried in the grave of night, were beginning to emerge from the darkness, and his eye travelled over the gorgeous panorama of his native valleys, he was no longer able to repress his feelings. He well knew there were hundreds around him who could participate in his emotions, and on whom that sight would act as an enchantment, making them forget their fatigues, and inspiring them with

fresh ardour to complete the conquest, whose trophies were now in view.

He lost no time, therefore, in sounding his trumpet, which awoke the echoes of the mountain. His brave men, startled at the summons, leaped from their rocky beds, and in a moment every weapon was unsheathed, as if they had heard the signal for battle. "Ye mistake me—ye mistake me," said he to his faithful band, who were now rallying around him; "I summon you not to battle, but to the top of this mount Pisgah, that ye may behold 'the land of promise,' 'the land which God gave unto your fathers!'" "See, your own valleys," cried the joyful champion, proudly pointing to the verdant slopes in the distance, hemmed in by their colossal mountains, which seemed the appointed guardians of these abodes of truth. "Behold the land of your birth, the cradle of your earthly bliss, the sepulchre of your ancestors! See ye not, whilst I am now speaking, how yonder sun is lighting the rocky steeps of Angrogna, and flinging his rays over the heights of St Martino, as if to betoken that a brighter sunshine is yet awaiting us, after our night of darkness and exile is spent? Ah! my noble boy," continued he, turning to the only one of his followers whose countenance was clouded with sorrow—"I know what brings the tear to thine eye: that ray

doubtless, seems to thee to be misplaced, which is falling on the rugged peaks of La Croix ! But think not of the cold tabernacle of dust, which has its temporary home amid these desolate solitudes ; —think rather with what complacency the departed saint, whose spirit has winged its flight into a better world, will contemplate his exiled flock once more returning to the fold of their fathers ! Jehovah, our deliverer, has brought us here on the morning of his own Sabbath ; and ere we begin our march, let us unite in ascribing glory to Him, for the protecting providence that has hitherto guided us in all our wanderings ; and let us set up our Ebenezer—our stone of remembrance, saying, ‘ hitherto hath the Lord helped us ! ’ ”

Upon this the whole assemblage, with their heads uncovered, and their hands clasped towards heaven, chanted, in strains of deep and thrilling melody, the following hymn ; every rock and mountain echoing back the wild chorus, as if in sympathy for the exiled wanderers :—

Great God of armies ! King of kings !

O ! spread thine everlasting wings

Around our pilgrim band ;

Still o’er us may thy banner stream,

And in Thy strength we shall redeem,

Our much loved fatherland !

Soon shall this night of trouble end,
If Thou from Zion help wilt send,
 And cause Thy face to shine ;
For, neither buckler, spear, nor shield,
Can win for us the battle-field,
 The victory is Thine !

Remember, Lord, thine ancient fold,
Our martyred fathers, who, of old,
 Bled on these mountains bare ;
Their couch the sod, their home the cave,
Their only resting-place, the grave,
 The snow their sepulchre !

And let Thy grace and power appear,
To us their children, banished here,
 When unto Thee we cry ;
See, they have laid our altars low,
And, wasted by the cruel foe,
 Our sanctuaries lie !

Hear us, O God ! and peace impart
To many a broken, bleeding heart,
 From home and kindred torn ;
Wilt Thou refuse the exiled race
Their fathers' peaceful dwelling-place,
 And cast us off forlorn ?

No,—we may banish every fear,
A greater than the foe is here,
 And in Him we will trust ;
For God the Lord is on our side,
And soon the fierce oppressor's pride
 Shall mingle with the dust !

Jehovah is our sure defence,
And, guarded by Omnipotence,
Our onward march shall be ;
Supported by our living Head,
And by the God of battles led
To death or victory !

Cheered and invigorated, they commenced their descent into the valley of Pragelas;* and directed their course towards the Col de Pis, a lofty mountain which terminates Val St Martino.

Passing the Balsille, of which we shall afterwards speak more particularly, they crossed the high Alp of Coline, and descended upon the first of their native villages, that of Prali. Nothing can exceed the wild sublimity of this mountain commune, which, to this hour, remains in a state of untamed and savage magnificence ; the cradle of Alpine tempests, and the home of the avalanche. No traces of cultivation are visible, except a few scattered patches on the banks of the Germanasca, or those isolated spots that chance to be screened from the fury of the storm by frowning precipices. Often do its inhabitants gaze for eight months together on a wilderness of snow, and yet, Protestants have for a thousand years chosen this howling desolation as a place of shelter ; when the

* See Appendix, note D.

banners of truth were torn from the sanctuaries of Bobbio, and the invader swept the fertile plains of Lucerna, the persecuted ever found a safe asylum among the rocks, and caverns, and lonely fastnesses of Prali.

The feelings of the exiles may be imagined, when, after three years' absence from their native homes, they found themselves once more within the sanctuary, in which they and their fathers had worshipped, and which was one of the few which their persecutors had not razed to the ground. Their joy, indeed, was at first mingled with indignant fury, to see its sacred walls hung and polluted with the signs of antichrist—the crucifix planted on the very spot where the man of God was wont to protest against idolatry, the remnants of the tapers still left in their sockets, and the withered leaves and chaplets still scattered on the floor, as mementos of the sacrilegious innovation. Sword and bayonet soon swept the walls of the detestable mummery, and they were consigned to the flames, with the exclamation of indignant triumph, “So perish all the enemies of God!” They then sang together the seventy-fourth psalm, which was beautifully and strikingly appropriate to the peculiar circumstances in which they were placed.

“O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of

thy pasture? Remember thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt. Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations, even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary. Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs. . . They break down the carved work thereof, at once with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into thy sanctuary; they have defiled by casting down the dwelling-place of thy name to the ground. They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land," &c. &c. "I then," says Arnaud, in his own narration of this hour of jubilee, "mounted a bench in the door-way, that I might be audible to those within and without the church, and preached in exposition of some of these verses."

In two days, they abandoned the fastnesses of St Martino, crossed the Col de Julien, and, chasing the foe from rock to rock, rushed down with irresistible fury on their great stronghold at Bobbio, dislodged the enemy from their fortifications, and the white banner of the Vaudois was once more seen waving from the window of its little sanctuary! The enthusiasm of the moment was unbounded; they were now in the very centre of the

land of promise, and their desponding hopes seemed crowned with bright fruition. The Pelice murmured in their ears; Castelluzzo, with its rocky battlements, rose in proud magnificence before their eyes.* The church spire of Villar was peeping above the sylvan glories in which it is embosomed: and they required only the trumpet of peace to be sounded in that lovely valley, and their wives and children to be welcomed back from the land of their exile, to endear Lucerna, with its chesnut groves, and verdant pasturages, a thousandfold in their eyes.

Sabbath morning found them assembled within the church of this picturesque commune, but the little "*temple*" was found insufficient to contain the worshippers, and they adjourned to one of the adjoining slopes, where an impressive discourse was delivered by M. Montoux, "from a door placed on two rocks." At the conclusion of the service, the valiant legion united in a holy covenant of mutual fidelity, which they took with uplifted hands, and which may prove interesting, as exhibiting the spirit and sentiments which animated them:—

"God, by his divine grace, having happily led us back into the heritage of our forefathers, there to re-establish the pure worship of our holy religion, by the completion of the enterprise which the

* See Appendix note E.

Great God of armies has hitherto conducted in our favour: We, the pastors, captains, and other officers, swear before God, and at the peril of our souls, to observe union and order amongst us; never willingly to separate nor disunite, while God shall grant us life, not even though we should be so miserable as to be reduced to three or four. Never to parley nor treat with our enemies, as well of France as Piedmont, without the participation of our whole council of war; and to put together the booty which we have, or shall have, to be applied to the wants of our people, or to extraordinary cases. And we, soldiers, swear this day, before God, to obey the orders of all our officers; and we swear fidelity to them with all our hearts, even to the last drop of our blood. Also, to give up to their care, the prisoners and booty, to be disposed of, as they shall think fit. And, in order to more perfect regulation, it is forbidden, under heavy penalties, to any officer or soldier to search any enemy dead, wounded, or prisoner, during, or after battle; but persons shall be appointed for this purpose. The officers are enjoined to take care that the soldiers keep their arms and ammunition in order, and, above all, to chastise severely any one who shall swear or blaspheme. And, to render union, which is the soul of our affairs, inseparable among us; we, the officers, swear fidelity

to the soldiers, and we, soldiers, to the officers; promising, moreover, to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to rescue, as far as may in us lie, our brethren from the power of the cruel Babylon, and with them, to re-establish and maintain his kingdom unto death; and by this oath we will abide all our lives."

After having united in this sacred confederacy, they retired to refresh themselves with a night's repose, and be in readiness on the morrow, for the prosecution of their perilous struggle.

But we must now return to Herbert and his companion, who would have yielded to none of their compatriots, in joy at once more beholding the home of their affections, had not a reverse of fortune, doomed them to a different destination.

In crossing the Col de Julien, the day preceding the arrival of the exiles at Villar, they had divided into three companies, pursuing different routes; in the centre one of which, were placed, Herbert Vinçon and Ferdinand Arnaud. They were marching along a narrow defile, skirted on both sides by a thick brushwood; when, all at once, they were assailed, both in front and rear, with a shower of missiles, accompanied with a multitude of voices shouting aloud, "Come on, ye barbets of Satan!" A faint resistance was attempted, but in vain: they were overpowered by numbers: a few escaped

by plunging into the thicket, or concealing themselves among the rocks. Herbert and his friend, with others of the brave band, were pinioned and manacled; a napkin was bound tightly across their eyes, and they were hurried, with every species of indignity, to the place of encampment. The hearts of the unfortunate captives were overwhelmed with terror, as they listened to the cruelties which were threatened to be inflicted on them. Some were for butchering them without delay in cold blood,—others for a slow death by torture; the command was given to collect wood for the pile—and the unhappy victims saw, that a death was awaiting them, more terrible far, than their imaginations had ever contemplated! One other proposal only, was suggested, that of marching the prisoners to the citadel of Pignerol, where, in two days, a number of the exiles were to be hanged, and by this means their oppressors would have an opportunity of obtaining fresh provisions, and a pretext for replenishing their cask of wine, which had been emptied by the forenoon's dissipation. This amendment on the original proposition, was carried with acclamation by the tumultuary band; and after consultation, Herbert and Ferdinand were fixed upon, as those who were to have extended to them the sad clemency of a postponement of their tortures, which in all probability would only tend to

their aggravation; and six sturdy guards were selected, as exhibiting least visibly the effects of their morning's potations, to conduct them to the place of their captivity.

We need not enter into the details of their journey:—In addition to the cords with which their hands were bound, heavy irons were placed on their shoulders, to prevent the possibility of escape. As they were departing, they heard the crackling of the flames that were kindling for their unhappy fellow-captives, and ere they reached the plain, their shrieks and groans became distinctly audible. After four hours' fatiguing march, preparations were made for halting during the night, at a solitary "aubergè" at the mouth of Val St Martin; and to render more secure the safety of the prisoners, they were consigned to different apartments, the soldiers acting as sentinels in rotation, while the remainder were occupied in giving free scope to their dissipations. There was one of the guards, who, from his conversation in the course of their journey, seemed to anticipate with more fiendish delight, than any of his comrades, the meditated butchery. The tones of his voice seemed familiar to Herbert,—and were associated in his mind, with some one of the many painful trials, which he had undergone during the few chequered years of his exile. At length, the picture of that darkest night

in his earthly history, was vividly portrayed, in which he was called upon to leave, in a desert mountain, the remains of what was dearest to him on earth. He had only to call to recollection the different actors in that tragical scene, to recognise in the voice of the most hardened of his present oppressors, the rude attendant of Father Bernard, —the cruel and unfeeling insulter of his dying parent—Alart Besson !

Herbert was thrown into a small barn, where some damp straw formed his only couch, and the cold night air was freely admitted through an aperture in the roof. Here he lay for two hours, without enjoying a moment's repose; at the end of which time, the sentinel who had been pacing with measured step before the door, retired in his turn, to enjoy the midnight revels, and was replaced by one, whose vigilance was by no means rendered more acute, by the similar occupation of the previous hours.—The unequal step with which he staggered for some time, was speedily exchanged for a heavy slumber, and the deep heavings of his breast, told the depth of his potations.

“ Is it possible,” thought Herbert with himself, as he cast his eye around the place of his captivity, “ that I can dream of escape ?”—but the thought seemed madness; his hands were bound behind his back with strong cords; his feet were shackled; the

door was firmly secured with a lock; and even had it been possible to tempt the mercenary spirit of his sentinel, he was utterly destitute of what would prove an adequate bribe; besides, his noble spirit recoiled from an attempt, which, if successful, would fearfully exasperate his oppressors, and add to their cruelties towards his friend. “No,” said he, checking himself in the presumptuous thought, “my hours are numbered; two days more, shall relieve me from these chains, and all the fetters of earth, and place me side by side, with the glorified spirits of departed friends. — And yet, can it be,” thought the fearless youth, after a few moments’ profound reflection, as he took a hasty glance at the place of his confinement, to see if every chance of escape were gone. “Yes! I shall! I shall! If I fail, it may cost me acuter tortures, a more cruel death; but the same Providence that has smiled upon me till this hour, seems to whisper that I should make the attempt;—the voice of an orphan sister sounds the same in my ear,—aye, and perchance too, liberty may be obtained for my poor companion; ere break of day, I may rejoin my brethren, and get their aid to effect his rescue!”

A gleam of moonshine, at that moment, streamed into the corner of the barn, where were accumulated a number of implements of agriculture:

he saw, that provided he could get his hands disentangled from the cords that bound them, there would be little difficulty in undoing the chains which fettered his limbs. After great exertion, he contrived to roll along the rough floor, till he reached the spot where this apparatus lay; he made repeated attempts to get himself raised in an upright posture, but as frequently failed; at last, he succeeded in placing the cords with which he was bound, on the blade of a scythe, and after several efforts, they were snapped asunder, and with a grateful heart, he found himself with his hands free. He now experienced no difficulty in undoing his fetters, and soon found himself once more at liberty, and ready for the daring attempt. His first object was to collect together the strongest of the cart ropes, which hung on the walls around him; these he tied together; with the use of the ladder, he ascended to the roof, and, crawling along the rafters, gained the desired loophole. There was just room, and no more, to allow him to creep through the narrow aperture; his clothes were torn, and his face and hands scarred; and, to add to his consternation, his foot loosened one of the tiles, which rattled down with a loud noise, and falling in a hundred splinters on the ground below, would have started any man from sleep, whose senses, an unusual quantity of liquor had not

steeped in forgetfulness. Discovery appeared now to be inevitable:—"I am lost! I am ruined!" said the poor boy to himself, as he remained with his body half through the place of escape, and hesitating whether he ought to abandon the attempt, and, returning to his bed of straw, await the sad fate which threatened him. But he was well aware that should he now return, it would be impossible to conceal in the morning, his attempt at escape: the loosened cords would betray him, and fearfully augment his tortures. Lifting up his heart, therefore, in silent prayer to God, he resolved to persevere, and fixing the ropes round one of the strongest of the rafters, he gradually lowered himself, till, at last, he reached the ground, and found himself breathing once more the free air of heaven!

But, although his attempt escaped the observation of his sentinel, there was another silent observer of his movements, whose presence at such a place, he little dreamed of. He had no sooner planted his feet on the ground, than he heard a voice issuing from a small window immediately adjoining. The sound at first overwhelmed him with fear, but its tones he had no difficulty in instantly recognizing: "Herbert Vinçon! Herbert Vinçon!" was uttered in a low suppressed voice.

“Is it thou, holy Father, who now speaks?” whispered Herbert in reply.

“It is, it is,” answered the voice; “I came here for thy succour, but thy courage has dispensed with my services.”

“But,” said Herbert, “a beloved friend lies within these walls, a captive, and the victim of coming tortures.”

“Leave thy captive friend to me,” was the reply; “see to thine own safety,—farewell, farewell; tarry here no longer: every moment may be detection, and death.”

Herbert plunged into the adjoining forest, and by break of day, was far beyond the reach of his oppressors.

CHAPTER VI.

'Tis not the whole of life, to live ;
Nor all of death, to die.

MONTGOMERY.

THE dawn of morning found the sentinel at the place of Herbert's confinement, still wrapt in slumber.

"Thou art taking thy post full easy, thou slug-gard," exclaimed the leader of the guard, as he stood at the side of Alart Besson,—“thy life is the forfeit justly due for thy neglect of duty: it is well that bolt and bar, fetter and manacle, have this night secured the heretics, else thy head should have been exacted as the penalty of thy remissness.”

“Ha !” exclaimed the soldier, springing on his legs, and recommencing at once, the pace that had been intermitted for full five hours, “if every sentinel in France and Savoy, were as true to his post as I am,”—

“Then the prisoners of war,” interrupted the officer, “would have good reason to congratulate themselves on their facilities of escape.”

“Thou doest me injustice,” responded the other; “five minutes have been the extent of my indulgence, and thou mayest see, from the tottering condition of my frame, my sunken eyes, the difficulty with which these fatigued arms can bear even the weight of this musket”—

“That thou hast drowned thy senses with thy last night’s potations, and that, to bring thee right, thy blood should be made to circulate with some strokes of the lash; or, better still,” (looking to the rope by which Herbert effected his escape) “here would be a befitting halter for thy neck:—But, how comes this!” continued he, changing the tone of his voice; “there has been some strange work here, last night: I heard neither rain nor tempest that could have scattered these tiles; come, thou reckless villain,” suspecting that all was not right, “let us see how thy charge looks this morning, and if he be ready for his evening funeral pile.”

The bolt was removed, and the superior, with the rest of the guard, entered the dungeon. They found all in silence; the fragments of the rope that bound the captive’s hands, were scattered on the floor; his fetters were lying by themselves among the straw of the couch; the ladder was still standing against the wall, and pointed to the aperture above, as the secret of his escape.

The officer stamped on the ground, his heart burning with indignation too deep to express. He laid his hand on his poniard, and the fiery glance of his eye, indicated that he was about to bestow a summary retribution on his satellite. "Nay," he exclaimed, as, after a moment's reflection, his hand fell from its resolution, "this would be too honourable a dismissal for thee, from this earth: the flames that have been cheated of the body of thy prisoner, shall have thine own as an equivalent; and thy head shall this night be ranged in befitting company with those of the barbets, on the gates of Pignerol."

"It is a glorious thing," replied Besson sullenly, "for one to die in the consciousness of having done his duty; if I have a clear conscience, I care not whether my grave be with saints or heretics."

"Hush thy hypocritical babblings," said the other; "bind him, with these same fetters," added he, addressing his companions, "and go, collect without delay, such materials as will most speedily kindle the flames."

The soldiers seemed to experience a pleasure, fully commensurate with that of their leader, in the prospect of inflicting so righteous a punishment for the crimes and the cruelties of their comrade. The neighbouring wood soon supplied the requisite

materials for the pile; and amid shrieks and groans, imprecations and agonies, without one tear of penitence for the past, or one ray of hope for the future, Alart Besson terminated his career of iniquity and blood!

Having made the necessary preparations for the prosecution of their march, they went to the prison of young Arnaud, who, in point of accommodation at least, had fared somewhat better than his liberated companion. But, who can depict the agonies of his mind, when, from his grated window, he beheld the dreadful preparations for the scene of death we have just described? He had seen a figure led forth amid the tumultuary shouts of the soldiers, and instantly concluded that it must be his own beloved Herbert: he had witnessed the rising flames, heard the shrieks, and finally, the deep portentous silence which seemed to intimate that the dearest friendship he had formed on earth, was now at an end! The moment was one too dreadful for tears—a cold sweat broke over his body, and sorrow for him whose agonies were now over, was almost lost in the thought that they were but the prelude to his own!

He heard the key turn in his door, the guard entered and undid his fetters, but, to his surprize, he listened to the stern command, to prepare, not for death, but for continuing his journey. When

they had commenced their march, and he found himself the solitary captive, his suspicions respecting the melancholy fate of Herbert, seemed fearfully confirmed. In vain did he occupy himself with conjectures, as to the cause of his being permitted to survive his friend, how it was "that the one should be taken, and the other left;" but he knew his situation too well, to venture on unbosoming his thoughts to his hardened companions, on whom, besides, had been imposed the strictest silence.

It was late in the evening, before they reached the walls of Pignerol, a little town situated at the mouth of Val Perosa, and commanding the boundless extent of the plains of Piedmont, which stretch like a garden all around. As they entered its citadel, a crowd of spectators were collected to witness the erection of a scaffold, on which some innocent Protestants were destined to suffer on the morrow; and a burst of acclamation rose from the assemblage, as they saw the cavalcade approaching, with another victim. The iron spikes which surmounted the entrance, were covered with the heads of the unfortunate objects of their religious fury, and sent a shuddering into the heart of Ferdinand, such as he had never felt in the midst of his enemies. They crossed moat and draw-bridge; the massive portals closed behind them, and, after

traversing a succession of gloomy passages, our young prisoner found himself in a dungeon, where nothing was to be seen but a few scattered bones, which filled his mind with dread forebodings of the lingering death that awaited him; and made him almost envy the fate of those, whose ghastly visages he had seen on entering the gate!

A short time only was permitted him to breathe the confined atmosphere of his new abode, when the door again opened, and four individuals presented themselves before him:—the first was a man of an unusually strong and muscular frame, considerably above the ordinary height;—a pair of thick mustachios covered his upper lip, and imparted a deeper aspect of severity to the natural sternness of his countenance. He was followed by one, whose garb and flowing beard, indicated the nature of his office—while his corporeal dimensions afforded presumptive evidence, that, however much he might venerate, by profession, the ascetic doctrines of his order, he unscrupulously neglected them in practice. The remaining two were dependants; and it was equally evident, from their dress and appearance, what was the nature of their calling,—coarse aprons were fastened round their waists, their shirt sleeves were tucked up to their shoulders, the one carried in his hand a bundle of wood, the other a knife, and some other iron

implements. — Ferdinand stood in no need of having it whispered to him, that he was now in the presence of his tormentors, and about to be the victim of a terrific combination of tortures!

“It is thine, young man,” said the governor of the citadel, who first entered—“It is thine,” said he, in a voice of thunder, “to choose thine own doom—an honourable captivity, or a lingering death. Confess thyself a son of our Holy Church, and receive absolution at the hands of this Reverend Father,—and a year of imprisonment within these walls will be accounted a sufficient atonement for thy past disobedience; or else, prepare thyself for agonies, such as thy imagination has never yet conceived.”

“Oh! have mercy!—have mercy!” exclaimed the poor boy, falling prostrate at the feet of his oppressor,—“thy nature could not surely permit thee to put such threats into execution, and to hold out, as the only alternative by which they can be avoided, the adoption of what conscience, truth, Heaven, forbids.—Thou wilt surely have mercy!”—

—“Talk not of mercy, young man,” interrupted the stern inquisitor;—“think not, that thy cries and tears will move me from my purpose. Hundreds of thy race have soaked this dungeon with their blood, and fed the flames of its fire,—but their shrieks no more shook this soul, than the

winds of heaven the rock on which stands this citadel."

"If thou hast no pity," said the despairing youth, "on this poor body, wilt thou not regard the cries of an orphaned sister, who looks on him, on whom thou art about to inflict thy cruelties, as all in the wide world, she can call her friend?"

"Hush thy trifling," said the other, assuming a still sterner tone,—“thou knowest not with whom thou hast to deal, in thus obtruding thy follies upon me. Thou art but wasting words, which will only increase thy tortures.—Come,” said he, in a voice which seemed to shake the very walls which inclosed them, “tell me, without another instant of delay, art thou to accept the too favourable offer which is now in thy power, and have thine accursed temples washed with holy water by this sacred attendant,—or, art thou to prefer the pincers and the thumb-screw—the rack and the flames?”

“Listen to me, once more,” said Ferdinand, struggling to compose his agitated feelings,—“In the name of reason, of conscience, of humanity, how can it be deemed possible, for the tongue to confess, what the soul denies?—Here,” said he, plucking his Bible from his bosom, “is the volume which we hold in common, to be the charter of our faith,—the code of our doctrine, the rule of our

lives;—point thy finger to the place that convicts me of error, and, that moment, I shall not only retract, but atone by what tortures thou mayest see meet to inflict, for my obstinate rejection of the truth.”

“Go,” said the unrelenting tyrant, addressing himself to one of his menials, at the same time tearing the sacred volume from the hands of the captive,—“Go, without delay, and kindle the fire; let this be its first fuel—and see that the instruments be well heated.”

The dependants gave a sign of acquiescence, and manifested a barbarous delight, as they hurried to make the dreadful preparations. A momentary pause ensued. “Is all ready?” exclaimed the governor to his minions. He was responded to by a nod—the terrible signal that the moment of lingering agonies had now arrived!

“Once more, young man,” said the superior, “I put it in your power, whether thou wilt accept of my clemency, on the condition on which it is offered, or have these red-hot pincers piercing thy vitals, till every inch of flesh be torn from thy bones, and thy flayed carcass be left for food to the vermin of this dungeon, until it becomes like these wrecks of humanity that lie scattered around you!”

“Oh! canst thou not,” exclaimed Ferdinand,

again falling down in a posture of suppliant agony, —“ Canst thou not inflict death on this wretched body, without these aggravated tortures? Recant, I cannot,—I dare not!—No agonies, however lingering—no cruelties, however barbarous, will tempt me to surrender what has been bought by the blood of my Saviour, and secured to me by that of his martyred saints ; or induce me to barter my hope of heaven, for a momentary respite from earthly torment. No,” said the poor boy, in a tone of firm and manly heroism, worthy of the noblest of his race,—“ my body I surrender—truth, I cannot. I throw myself on thy mercy, and, if I am denied *thy* sympathy, I have that of Heaven!”

“ Thou art a bold youth,” replied the other, “ but thy magnanimity shall now be put to the test. Strip him, minions, and bind him hand and foot on this rack.”

The poor boy was in a moment stretched on a wooden framework, whose transverse bars were clotted with the blood of the murdered. His hands and feet were firmly tied down with ropes, so that even a movement of a limb, or a convulsion of the body, was impossible. One of the executioners hurried to the fire, for the red-hot irons ; the other stood at the feet of the victim, with his bare arms folded, and the knife clenched between his teeth,

in savage readiness for the anticipated butchery. The command was given to pierce his nostrils with the burning pincers—when, a knock was heard at the door, and one of the keepers informed the governor, that a stranger waited in the outer courtyard, desirous of an interview. The superior left the dungeon, and gave orders to his dependants to suspend their operations till his return.

This brief interval was spent by the wretched victim, in lifting up his heart in prayer, for strength to enable him to witness a good confession, and to prevent him exhibiting a pusillanimity unworthy of the name of Arnaud. He was consoled by the thought, that, in a few hours at most, his spirit should once more rejoin that of his departed friend, which, he now almost fancied, was hovering over his couch of suffering, in readiness to conduct him into glory. He remembered the thousands in his native valleys, who had submitted with noble resignation to a similar fate; and rejoiced to think that his own voice would speedily be added to swell their prayer:—"How long, O Lord! holy and true! dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the earth!"

After a few minutes, the governor returned.—
"Young man," said he, addressing himself to Ferdinand, "thy doom is, for a time at least, suspended. An alien to thee in religion and in blood, but one

who has more than ordinary claims on my clemency, has sued for a mitigation of thy punishment.—Minions,” said he, addressing the dependants, “it is my pleasure that these bonds be unloosed, and that ye conduct this prisoner to the western turret of the castle. See that his safety is secure, and also that he be well provided for.”

Ferdinand listened to the words which fell on his ear, more as if they were the transient visions of a feverish dream, than a joyful reality; he felt the cords, by which he had been so cruelly bound, unloosed; and, in a state of half unconsciousness, arising from mental exhaustion and bodily weakness, was carried up a winding stair to a small circular apartment, where we must now leave him for a little, to inquire after the fate of Herbert, and the rest of the intrepid band.

CHAPTER VII.

“Earth to earth,” and “dust to dust,”
The solemn priest hath said,
So we lay the turf above thee now,
And we seal thy narrow bed :
But thy spirit, brother, soars away
Among the faithful blest,
Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest !

MILMAN.

DANGERS and calamities were accumulating around the exiles. Every day witnessed a diminution in their numbers ; the enemy, with an increase of troops, and exasperated vengeance, were literally “coming in upon them as a flood ;” the piercing storms of winter were beginning to sweep their valleys, “the fields yielded no meat, the flock was cut off from the fold, there was no herd in the stalls,” and no consolation was left to the sufferers, in their unequal contest, but trust in the propitious smiles of Providence.

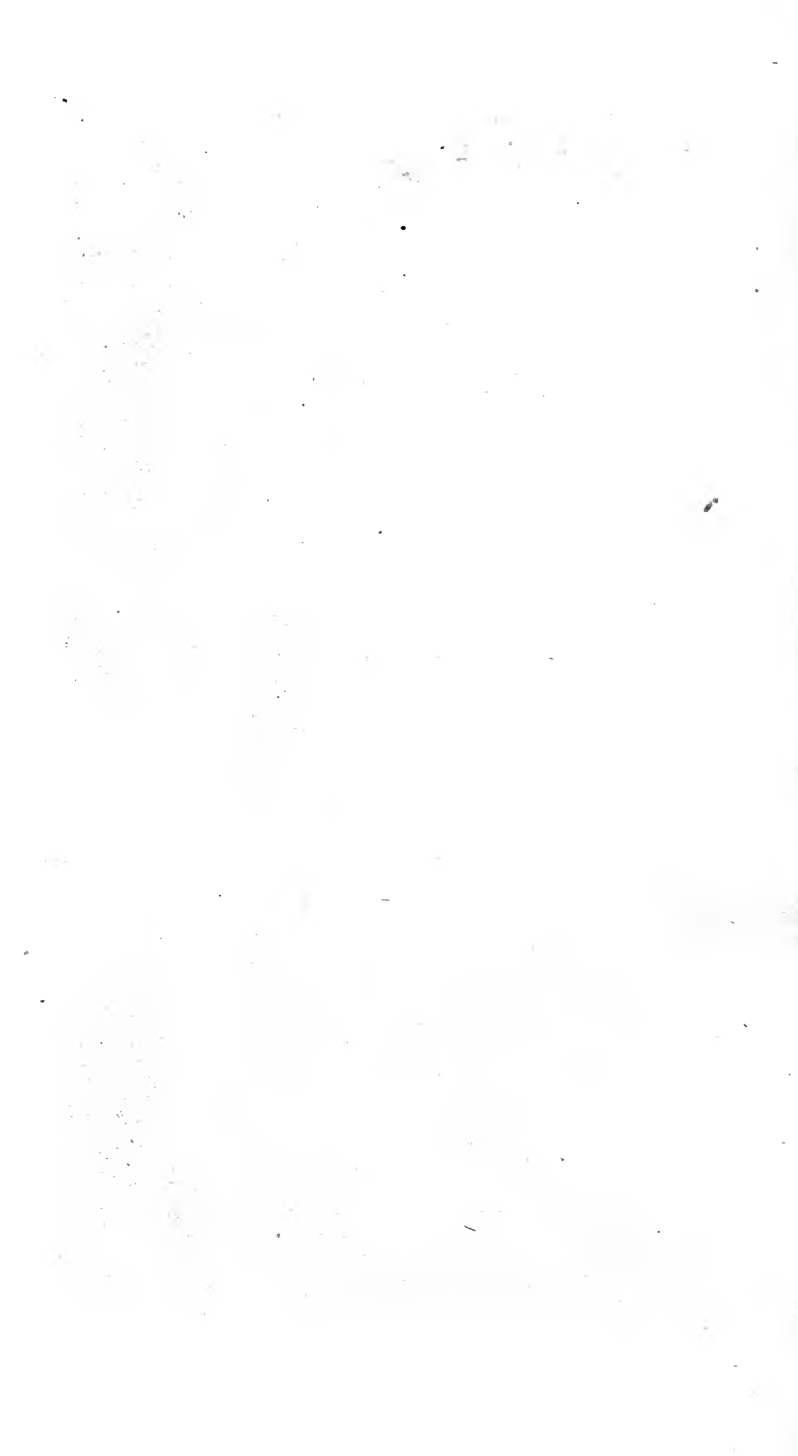
Passing over the perils they had encountered, and the struggles in which they had engaged, since

the Sabbath morning on which we left them at Villar, the evening of the 16th of October found them in the vicinity of Rodoretto; and, never since their departure from the banks of Lake Geneva, was there a time fraught with more imminent danger. The foe hemmed them in on every side. Not a moment, therefore, was to be lost: their retreat must be made under cover of darkness, as the first gleam of day would be the signal for their destruction. Before midnight, a council of war was convened, to determine what course they should pursue; and, after mature deliberation and earnest prayer, they resolved, at the suggestion of their leader, to march before break of day, to the Balsille; and Arnaud gave directions, before setting out, to heighten their present intrenchments and add to their fires, that the enemy might be led to believe they were still waiting in readiness to encounter them.

Two hours before dawn of morning they commenced their route. So intense was the darkness, that their guides wrapped themselves in white linen, that they might be more easily seen. Their direct road lay through Salsa, but a large body of French troops were stationed on its heights, and discovery would be inevitable. Only one alternative remained, although it was a desperate one,—to climb over rocks, descend precipices, and make their own

bodies the bridges over frightful chasms. After a night of unparalleled exertion, they succeeded in surmounting the accumulation of obstacles which opposed their progress; but day light extracted a shudder, as it disclosed the terrific course they had pursued, the full extent of whose dangers the darkness had concealed. At length they planted their little standard on the heights of the Balsille. This remarkable spot, which the God of nature seemed to have upreared as a citadel for his oppressed people, is situated near the extremity of the valley of St Martino, and is composed of a gigantic rampart of rock, almost perpendicular, and commanding both sides of the narrow defile, which is watered by a tributary of the Germanasca. Three fountains supplied the fortress with water: the only side on which there was the least possibility of access, was, by the command of Arnaud, fortified with palisades and parapets of turf, strengthened with timber from the adjoining forests of pine and chesnut. Seventeen of these walls or embankments were constructed, one above another, so that, when dislodged by the enemy from one, they might take refuge behind the next. The Vaudois hailed this new retreat, as affording a sure respite from the sanguinary horrors, to which, for two months, they had been exposed; and, in the prospect of having it as





their permanent residence -for the winter, they hollowed out eighty caves or caverns in the solid rock, to serve as barracks.

Several days elapsed, before the place of their retreat was discovered by their enemies. The French, under the command of de l'Ombrail, had proceeded, on the morning of their retreat, to their intrenchments at Rodoretto. Their chagrin and disappointment may be conceived, when, after a long and toilsome march, they found the post deserted, and nothing left but the smouldering ashes of their fires, a few chesnuts, and a little wine. Infuriated with disappointment, they descended to Prali, to wreak their vengeance there; but they found *its* hamlets also deserted; and it was only after many fruitless wanderings that they at last discovered the refugees on the summit of the Balsille.

As the rigours of winter now demanded a cessation of hostilities, they resolved to make a last desperate effort to crush the mountaineers, and wipe out the disgrace of an inglorious campaign. Their only hope of success, lay in obtaining possession of the village, which was situated at the base of the rock, on the opposite bank of the stream. Thither the French general despatched the bravest of his troops, while Arnaud descended with the flower of his legion, to dispute their en-

trance. The French poured across the bridge with desperate resolution; Arnaud, for a while, remained aloof, in hopes that the stones and musketry, that were pouring destruction on the assailants from the rocks above, would have driven them back; but, perceiving that they were resolved to hazard every thing, he shouted his watchword, and a dreadful conflict ensued. For a time, the issue remained doubtful, but at length numbers prevailed: the little band were overpowered, and their spirits sunk within them, as they beheld the invaders planting their banner in the middle of the huts, and, a moment after, the flames bursting from their roofs, and threatening to lay the whole in ashes! Their leader himself, seemed about to give up all for lost; when, on a sudden, a voice was heard behind, shouting to the desponding Vaudois, "Courage!" brave friends, "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" "It is, it is," exclaimed Arnaud, in a burst of rapture, "the champion of Sei,—on! on! to victory, to victory!" The very sight of this mysterious ally inspired fresh courage into every heart. He and Arnaud led the way;—"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," rose to heaven, and was re-echoed by the voices of the spectators from above. Plunging across the bridge, the furious onset struck terror into the foe; the flag that was waving in triumph

on the height, was uprooted, and the discomfited legion left sixty comrades behind them, weltering in their blood. The air rang with the acclamation of the conquerors; and their first impulse, after extinguishing the flames, was to render the tribute of their grateful acknowledgments to him who had turned the tide of victory. One comrade only, of their little band, had suffered in the combat; but, how was their joy turned into lamentation, when they found that it was the unknown hero, who had fallen a victim to his own valour! He had received a mortal wound in the side, and lay amid the heaps of the slain!

“It is even so, it is even so,” said their pious leader, as he extricated the body from the mass of the dead. “Read here, my brave men, the lesson, to give the glory of every achievement, not to man, but to God,—not to an arm of flesh, but to an arm of Omnipotence!” There were still symptoms of life; and Arnaud, leaving behind a sufficient force to protect the village, carried the wounded man, with the assistance of some of his followers, to the top of the Balsille.

A deep and thrilling sensation spread through the camp, as the tidings were communicated, and all seemed to rival one another in ministering relief to the sufferer. He was laid on Arnaud’s own couch, whilst every endeavour was used to stanch

the wound, which was bleeding profusely. He seemed to revive, on a little wine being administered to him, and gazed wildly around, as if just awakening from a swoon, and at a loss to discover where he was. At last, recollecting his position, and feeling that his hours were now numbered, he made an effort to speak:—"Is Herbert Vinçon here?" said he, with a trembling voice; "if he be, tell him to come quickly hither." Herbert, who had been busied in repairing the intrenchments which had suffered in the late struggle, was, in an instant, in the cabin, where the dying man was laid. He started back as he entered,—the broad cap which had covered the upper part of the sufferer's face was removed, and he beheld features, somewhat altered, indeed, but which he could not mistake. There lay before him, stretched on a couch of death, his preserver, his benefactor,—the monk of Chartreuse!

"Herbert, my son, my son Herbert, knowest thou the countenance that is now soon to be cold in death?"

"Kindest father!" exclaimed the affectionate youth, grasping the paralysed hand, and a tear rolling down his cheek, such as had never filled his eye since the night he stood by the sod which covered his aged parent,—“can it be, that I see before me, my best benefactor, to whom I owe my

own life, and that of the only other remaining joy which makes life a blessing?"

"Thou dost, thou dost, my child ; and glad I am, ere I close these eyes, to clasp the hand I most love, and breathe on thy noble spirit, the benediction of a grateful, though unworthy heart."

"How sad," said Herbert, "that our meeting is not a more joyful one ; and sadder still that I should have been, as I fear I have, the cause of bringing thee hither, and of preparing thy grave."

"My grave has been dug by Heaven, not by thee," replied the resigned sufferer. "Our days are in the hands of One, who knows the time that is best for withdrawing the breath which he gave; but, even had it been as thou sayest, what proportion would the sorrow, caused by the wounds of this body, bear to the joy of having been the instrument of the salvation of this soul? Yes, Herbert, my beloved boy," the tear starting for the last time to the eye of Hubert Durand; "I would like thee and thy friends to behold the breastplate, which I have borne in all my wanderings, over hill and valley, rock and precipice, and which, even in this hour of fiercer than mortal conflict, is bidding defiance to the darts of the king of terrors!" With a dying effort, he raised his hands, undid his cassock, and disclosed to the eyes of Herbert the sacred legacy, which, three years ago, he had

deposited in the cell of his monastery ! “ In this blessed volume,” said he, a gleam of joy lighting up his pale features, “ I have found a peace, which, during years of monastic penance, never dawned upon me ; and now that I am standing on the borders of eternity, I can exult in the assurance, that the vilest of sinners—a blasphemer, a murderer, can yet die a child of God—an heir of glory ! ”

Herbert was unable to utter a word, amid the conflicting emotions of wonder, gratitude, and praise ; but mingled his tears with the friends around, at the recital of the touching story.

“ My beloved Herbert,” said the dying man, once more, “ I feel that my strength is fast failing me ; and ere this tongue be silent, I wish to inform thee of the continued health of thy sister and her companion, and the kindness of those, whom Providence has appointed their guardians. And thou, brave leader of a persecuted race,” said he, turning to Arnaud, “ know, that by my intercession, thy young relative has been snatched from a cruel death, and is now consigned to an honourable captivity : but the place I am strictly forbidden, by the solemn compact by which clemency was extended, to disclose.” Arnaud had long ere now concluded that the name of Ferdinand had been added to the noble army of martyrs, and it may be conceived, therefore, with what feelings of

astonishment and joy he listened to the tidings that he yet lived !

The dying Christian had only strength remaining to encourage the exiles in their arduous struggle. "Go on," said he ; "victory will soon be yours ; ye have espoused a righteous cause ; and, in the strength of your fathers' God, your insulted sanctuaries shall yet once more be your own."—— His voice grew fainter and fainter ; he sunk exhausted under loss of blood, and muttering a feeble farewell, closed his eyes in peace !

The spectators of this affecting scene, stood for many minutes in breathless stillness ; overpowered and paralyzed by what they had seen and heard. "Witness," said Arnaud, at length breaking silence, his eyes fixed on the pallid countenance which lay before him,—“witness the triumph of truth,—the power of faith,—the peace and joy of believing ! Is not this a noble recompense for every peril and suffering we have undergone ? Yes, it is even so ! The Lord ever makes the afflictions of his people, turn out for the furtherance of his cause,—bringing good out of evil, order out of confusion, light out of darkness ; making the very ‘wrath of man to praise him.’ Who would have supposed, that a dreadful edict, which drove an innocent people from their native

hearths, was to be the means, in His hand, of plucking a brand from the burning,—and of converting the cell of a monk, into the gate of heaven,—and filling a bosom with hope, that was once dark with despair? But,” continued the pious conqueror, “let us give the praise, to whom the praise alone is due!” They united together in singing a few appropriate verses; after which, Arnaud, unclasping the Bible, from whose pages, the spirit that was departed, had first learned the peace, whose celestial blessedness it was now called to enjoy, read aloud the sublime apostrophe of the Apostle Paul, “Oh death, where is thy sting? oh grave, where is thy victory? the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” After an affecting address on these words, preparations were made for the interment of the body. A solitary cluster of pines, about two hundred yards from the castle, was selected as the spot for his grave. In a short time, the rude sepulchre was completed; and, in solemn silence, the mournful procession wound their way to pay the last sad tribute to the Christian hero. Herbert supported his head as he was lowered into his resting-place. Once more, with uncovered heads, they joined together

in prayer ; and left the ashes of their fallen friend, to mingle with their kindred dust, in the sure and certain hope of an immortality beyond the grave.*

The death-bed we have just described, will now have revealed to our readers, who the mysterious intercessor was, who procured for Ferdinand Arnaud a respite from a cruel and protracted death. He had left the walls of his monastery, without having communicated to any of his order the cause of his departure ; and, on hearing of the daring enterprise of the exiled Waldenses, he resolved not to be premature in disclosing to the world, the triumph which truth had effected in his heart. By still retaining the outward form of a religion which, in his heart, he had learned to condemn, he thought he might possibly prove serviceable to the sufferers in their adversity, and help to aid a cause, which he now espoused as Heaven's and his own. He had often, unknown to them, mingled in disguise with their ranks, in the hour of battle. He had been present in the skirmish on the Col de Julien, which had loaded our two young Vaudois with chains ; and had followed their oppressors to the place of their confinement, where he

* See Appendix, note F.

had the unexpected interview we have described, with Herbert Vinçon. At first, he thought of tempting the guard with a large bribe for the liberation of the captives; but, on overhearing their intention of conducting them to the citadel of Pignerol, he resolved to delay, and sue for clemency at the hands of the governor himself, formerly one of his accomplices in guilt and cruelty, and who, when the world was about to be rid of a villain, owed his preservation to the hands of Hubert Durand. Hardened as was the spirit of this stern inquisitor, he was not so utterly dead to feeling, as to forget the claim which his intercessor thus had for an extension of his mercy. He refused to grant the prisoner release; but agreed to mitigate his punishment, by consigning him to the solitary tower where we left him at the end of the last chapter, and promised, that nothing should be wanting to conduce to his safety and comfort.

The disconsolate females, whom we left in Switzerland, under the roof of the shepherd of Lauterbrunnen, were beginning, long ere now, to feel the deepest anxiety for the fate of their countrymen. Reports, indeed, had reached the chalet, which Albert and Mariette tried in vain to conceal from their young charge, that the whole band had been given up to indiscriminate slaughter, without one having been left to tell the tale. Weeks rolled

along, without anything transpiring to remove their gloomy apprehensions ; and the exiled girls were beginning to think, they had too good ground to conclude, that the day on which they bade farewell to their beloved relatives on the banks of Lake Thun, was the last on which they were to be permitted to see their faces on earth !

One evening, in the beginning of October, Alice and Julia were seated at the fire of the little chalet, brooding in silence over prospects that were every day growing darker. Albert had just returned from the mountain with his fleecy charge; his sagacious attendant, Blanco, lay stretched at his feet; while Mariette was busied in preparations for their frugal meal.

As the little group were thus occupied, a knock was heard at the door; the females started at the sound at that unwonted hour, nor was the surprise of the shepherdess diminished, when, on opening it, she beheld a figure, wrapped in a dark mantle, standing before her.

“ Fear not, my good woman,” said the stranger, seeing her agitation ; “ I come on no evil errand. Are you the benefactress, and is this the home, which for three long years has sheltered two helpless exiles underneath its roof?”

Alice and her companion had, in their timidity, crept behind the chair of Albert. Unwilling to

disturb unnecessarily the profound slumbers of Blanco, Julia grasped in her hand his shaggy hide, to be in readiness to solicit his services, if required.

No sooner had Alice Vinçon heard the voice of the stranger, than, uttering a shriek of joy, she rushed to the door, and with open arms, welcomed in her kind friend and benefactor, Father Bernard.—It was a day of jubilee to the two desolate exiles. They listened, with a joy, which no words can describe, to the intelligence, that their beloved friends were now once more among their native fastnesses.—A thousand interrogatories about the little band, were poured in upon the stranger—fresh wood was heaped on the fire—a simple feast was spread on their humble board—and never was happiness greater, nor attention more rivetted, than when they listened to the daring achievements, the hair-breadth escapes, and the imminent perils, of a handful of brave mountaineers, who had spread the terror of their name, into the camps and armies, the courts and cabinets, of France and Sardinia.

Still deeper and more intense, was the interest with which Alice heard her kind benefactor relate the change which had taken place in his own soul, through the instrumentality of the sacred memento of gratitude which her beloved brother had

deposited in his cloister. He drew the treasured volume from his bosom, and the little circle united together in pouring out a thankoffering of gratitude and praise to God, for his providential protection to their wandering countrymen.

Several days were spent by Father Bernard at this peaceful retreat, before returning to the camp of the Vaudois, to carry the equally welcome tidings of their preservation to their anxious friends. It was when reaching the termination of this benevolent pilgrimage, that the fatal event took place, which deprived the Vaudois of a faithful ally, and Herbert and Alice Vinçon of one, who, next to the leader of the exiles, had proved their kindest and most devoted friend.

But we must now pass over the intervening months, during which, the Waldenses remained encamped in their mountain stronghold, unmolested by the foe, who had retired to their winter quarters, and once more introduce our readers to the lonely turret of the young captive at Pignerol. Let us only remark in passing, that notwithstanding the rigours of the season, most of the little band had survived its inclemencies in their Alpine citadel. The surrounding forests contributed an abundant supply of fuel; and the harvest of the preceding summer, which had been allowed to remain uncut by their enemies, had been miracu-

lously preserved uninjured, under a deep covering of snow, and warded off the certain famine that must otherwise have overtaken them.

This fact is recorded to this day, by their pious descendants, as one of the most striking of the many signal proofs of the interposition of the Great Head of the Church in behalf of this persecuted remnant, and as a remarkable fulfilment of his own promise to his suffering people—" Their bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure."

CHAPTER VIII.

I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my little window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu.
But was it such?—

COWPER.

THE winter months rolled heavily over the head of the youthful prisoner. With many an anxious thought, he looked forward to the approaching spring, as the momentous crisis in which was to be finally determined, whether the standard of Protestantism or Popery should be erected in the valleys of Lucerna and St Martin.

A large detachment of French troops, who had been occupied in summer among the Waldensian fastnesses, were now stationed at Pignerol; and, often did the heart of Ferdinand sink within him, as he overheard, from the place of his captivity, the fearful imprecations, and deadly vengeance, which they uttered against the persecuted race. Never was so deep a stain affixed on their ensigns, as on the banks of the Germanasca, by a handful

of peasants ; and the repose of winter only seemed to increase their thirst for revenge, and their resolution to permit the stigma to remain no longer.

On the last day of April, 10,000 French, and 12,000 Sardinian troops, were marched to the Bal-sille, to effect the dislodgement of the mountaineers. " Every barbet shall be hanged in the evening," was the cry that resounded from the exasperated armies, as they planted their banners at the base of the impregnable fastness. De Catinat, the French general, placed himself at the head of the regiments of Bourbon, Artois, and Lasarre—the invincibles of the seventeenth century. The undaunted Vaudois beheld the terrific armament with unshaken fortitude, and prepared to receive their onset. An incessant fire was poured down upon them from the rocky arsenal—the older and more experienced marksmen occupying the loopholes, while the more youthful were employed in loading their muskets. A quarter of an hour decided the contest. The legions of France and Piedmont quailed at the desperate valour of the undisciplined mountaineers ; they retreated in confusion, and left 400 dead on the field, while not a drop of blood had been lost by the Vaudois.

De Catinat, covered with shame, threw up the command, which now devolved on M. de Feuquieres ; but the shattered legions allowed them-

selves only a short breathing time, before again venting their unsatiated vengeance. And, on Easter Eve, the 10th of May, the trumpet once more sounded; and French and Savoyards, waving their naked swords in the air, vowed they should never again be sheathed, until drenched with the blood of the barbets. They poured, with furious resolution, across the bridge, seized the village, and, raising a breast-work and parapet from its ruins, protected themselves from the destructive fire of the besieged. By shifting their parapet of faggots, they gradually advanced nearer and nearer, until they were within speaking distance of the enemy. "Surrender, ye base traitors!" was a demand which was again and again made through a speaking trumpet—"surrender, and perchance ye may somewhat mitigate the fate which awaits you. Think you, ye barbets of Satan, that ye shall be permitted any longer to wave defiance in the face of the combined forces of France and Savoy? Surrender, or, by our holy faith, ye shall repent of your folly."

But threats and menaces were in vain, to strike terror into hearts, who felt that God had espoused their cause; and Feuquieres, finding that a profuse expenditure of ammunition was all that was effected by his daring attack, fell back on the Guigenevert, a hill which rose on the opposite side

of the valley, and resolved there to erect batteries, and fill them with cannon from Pignerol. The white banner was now uprooted; and a crimson flag, the emblem of indiscriminate carnage, hoisted in its stead.

It was on the 10th of May, that Ferdinand overheard, from his turret, the dreadful intelligence, that several pieces of cannon were next day to leave Pignerol, to be planted on the heights of the Guigenevert, to drive his suffering kinsmen from their stronghold. Young and inexperienced as he was in military tactics, he well knew, that this terrific force would prove too powerful for the intrenchments of the Balsille, and that certain destruction awaited the exiles. It may be imagined, with what feelings he listened at the window of his solitary chamber, to the trampling of the war-steeds, and the heavy wheels of the artillery, that were conveying the destructive engines to the valley of St Martin. His eye followed the dreadful procession, until the last of the rear had turned up Val Perosa.

Three days after, the shrill notes of a trumpet were heard, proclaiming "to all who wished to behold the destruction of the barbets, to repair on the morrow to Pignerol!" Crowds of idle spectators, gathered at the summons, to be the witnesses of the meditated cruelty. As Ferdinand lay toss-

ing on his midnight couch, the streets resounded with bacchanalian revelries, and feasts of rejoicing were held in celebration of the expected tragedy. At an early hour in the morning, every house-top was crowded with spectators; each seemed desirous to catch the first glance of the cavalcade, and communicate the intelligence to the blood-thirsty multitudes.

Ere the sun had climbed the meridian, a body of men were seen in the distance, slowly emerging from the entrance to the valley of Perosa, and the glittering of swords and helmets announced to the crowd, that their sanguinary expectations were about to be realized. "They come—they come!" was echoed with frantic joy from street to street, and from window to window; and the hammers of the workmen that were erecting the scaffolds, seemed to acquire a fresh impetus from the sound. There was at least one heart in Pignerol, which was filled with far other feelings than those of joy, on learning the approach of the conquerors. Ferdinand Arnaud received the appalling intelligence, with the firmness and fortitude, the calmness and resignation, of a Christian martyr; but, at the same time, with all the deep and poignant feeling of a heart that was susceptible of the tenderest sympathies of human nature. It would have ministered a melancholy alleviation to his grief, had

he enjoyed the presence of a single friend in this desolate moment; but he had now no longer the affectionate companion, who was wont to rejoice with him in all his joys, and weep with him in all his sorrows: and who, he felt assured, would not have been wanting, in this hour of anguish, in ministering comfort to his fainting spirit. He ventured to look from his little window, which commanded a prospect of the highway, and awful were the sensations of the moment, which disclosed the enormous waggons moving along the road, containing the victims of the approaching tragedy! There followed an interval of agonizing suspense, between their first appearance in the distance, and their arrival in the streets. He drew his ear closer to the bars of his window, to catch every whisper from beneath, that might reveal the truth. His countenance betrayed the deep emotions that were heaving in his bosom. At one moment, he was pale with terror, and his eyes were filled with tears; at another, his hands were clasped to heaven, in earnest supplication that God “would hear the groaning of the prisoner, and free them that were appointed to death.” He listened; but the deafening clamours of the crowd were now exchanged for a gloomy, portentous silence, as if the dreadful prelude and precursor of approaching death. He listened still: suddenly, the death-like paleness of

his cheek was suffused with a flush of crimson; once more, his hands were uplifted in prayer, and a flood of tears gushed from his eyes. But—these tears were tears of joy—these prayers were the breathings of wonder, love, and praise! His ear listened to tidings, which were at first too astounding to be credited, that 20,000 of the choicest chivalry of France and Sardinia, with their destructive artillery, had been unable to singe so much as one hair of the Vaudois; and that the waggons which climbed the steepes of St Martino, to be filled with the wretched exiles, had actually been converted by the assailants into hospitals for their own wounded—receptacles for their own slain! It was the work of God! another pledge, that Omnipotence was on the side of the defenceless sufferers. Ferdinand threw himself on his couch, in prostrate adoration to the God of his fathers, who had once more given to his people “help from trouble, when vain was the help of man!”

It was on the 13th of May, that these pieces of artillery first awoke their thunders in Val St Martino. The entrenchments of the Balsille, impervious to musketry, were driven to pieces by this terrific force. The Vaudois retreated from parapet to parapet, till the last embrasure was demo-

lished; and the shades of the evening found them on the very brink of destruction. It was evident, that by no effort of bravery could their mountain stronghold be any longer tenable: death, or a midnight escape, were their only alternatives; but how was the latter to be accomplished? The enemy had posted detachments on all the heights and passes around, to prevent the possibility of escape; and large fires were blazing on every mountain top, to prevent their availing themselves of the darkness of the night. To any other minds, but those of these daring men, all would now have seemed hopelessly and irrecoverably lost; but the thought of falling into the hands of their inhuman oppressors, goaded them on to hazard every peril and endure every suffering, rather than submit to be the victims of their ruthless vengeance.

“Retreat, we must, brave friends!” exclaimed Arnaud; “though our road should lie over ravine and precipice; it is better far to meet our death by being shattered on the rocks, than surrender our bodies to infamy and torture. See,” continued he, as he pointed to a cloud of mist, which at that moment came rolling down the valley, “how the hand of Jehovah is in this, the hour of our extremity, outstretched to save us!” And it was even so: they were enveloped in its sable curtain; which was so dense, as to permit them to

descend the rock undiscovered. Their route lay over frightful precipices, down which they contrived to lower themselves, by sliding on their backs, and catching hold of the projecting fragments of stone. It was necessary to take off their shoes, to preserve a more profound silence, and their feet were torn and lacerated by the thorns and rough pieces of rock which were scattered on their path. After indescribable dangers and sufferings, they were seen, two hours after day break, far above the enemy, on the ridge of the Guigenevert. The alarm was sounded; and Feuquieres at first refused to give credence to the daring retreat. He ordered his troops to attack, without delay, the deserted entrenchments, and the air rang with horrid imprecations, as they beheld nothing left, but the naked rocks,—their labours frustrated,—their schemes disconcerted,—their valour mocked and insulted,—by a handful of undisciplined mountaineers!

CHAPTER IX.

Childhood's loved group revisits every scene ;
The tangled wood-walk, and the tufted green ;
Up springs, at every step, to claim a tear,
Some little friendship, formed and cherished here :
And, not the lightest leaf, but, trembling, teems
With golden visions and romantic dreams.

ROGERS.

As we must now draw our narrative to a close, it will be necessary to pass in silence, over the succession of dangers and perils, which the Waldenses underwent, subsequent to their retreat from the Balsille. This nocturnal decampment, so far from purchasing for them a respite from farther pursuit, only tended to fan the flame, which repeated defeats had kindled in the breasts of their persecutors. Day after day, they were hunted from hill to hill, and from mountain to mountain, and many were the unhappy victims, who, from fatigue or sickness, lingered behind and fell a prey to the merciless cruelties of the foe. They retreated among the fastnesses of Angrogna, sending out from time to time, small foraging detachments, while the main body remained intrenched, among

its deep ravines, and impenetrable thickets. The very name of a Vaudois, now struck terror into the heart of the enemy, and a hundred disciplined men would retreat at the sight of a few peasants, who, although untutored in the tactics of the plain, were greatly their superiors in the arts of mountain warfare. The divine promise to the Israelites of old, seemed in their case literally fulfilled: "Five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight, and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword."

One evening near the end of May, while they lay encamped on the heights of Angrogna, the loveliest and most romantic of all the valleys, their eyes were attracted by a small cavalcade in the distance, moving up the glen, and bearing an ensign, different from any which they had for long been accustomed to behold: "A flag of truce! a flag of truce!" was shouted by the enthusiastic band. "Can it be that a propitious Heaven is about to terminate our sufferings, and make these valleys once more our own?" Two envoys of the king of Savoy advanced, bearing the emblem of peace. Arnaud and his troop laid aside their weapons, and with respectful deference rose to receive them.

"We come, brave men of the valleys," said Bertin, who held the terms of conciliation in his

hand, "we come on an errand of peace;—once, we were foes; now, we desire to become your friends!"

"Never," replied Arnaud, "was it the desire of a Vaudois, that that friendship should have been turned into hostility. We are men, loving peace; our religion is a religion of peace; our God is a God of peace; and it is only when compelled to purchase peace, at the expense of conscience, liberty, truth, that we ever have had recourse to arms. Let the house of Savoy point to the page in our annals, when the Protestants of Clusone and Lucerna rose in rebellion, or were unmindful of the allegiance they owed to their lawful sovereign, and we are willing this moment to atone with our lives, for the crimes of our forefathers."

"Had your religion, good friends," replied the envoy, "been in keeping with your loyalty and heroism, a nobler heritage would now have been yours, than these savage fastnesses. But, enough of the past,—listen to what I have now to lay before you."

Every ear was attention, as the ambassador proceeded to declare the royal message:

"The monarch of France," said he, "the haughty and supercilious tyrant, who has been the author of all the evils that now afflict you, and who has deluged your valleys with blood, has de-

clared war against your liege lord and sovereign of Savoy. The armies of Louis are even now preparing to desolate his dominions, and threaten the security of his throne. It is the pleasure of his Royal Highness, to grant pardon to every Protestant Vaudois, to reinstate them in their lawful possessions, to restore to them their churches, and the free use of their own religion, on condition that they rally around him in this hour of need, and assist in quelling the oppressor."

"Give us our homes! give us our Bibles! give us our God!" cried the little band in this moment of their enthusiasm, "and we shall promise, not only to league ourselves with our sovereign against the common enemy, but to be the first to attack, and the last to retreat; the foremost in every battle, and the last on every field!"

"It is enough, it is enough," said the envoy, "ye are brave men, and trusty subjects. I shall convey your answer to your royal master, and, in a few days, we shall wait on you, with a definite reply, and formal articles of convention."

At the stipulated time the ambassadors returned, and Arnaud had a treaty of peace, signed by the sovereign himself, put into his hands.

The French were now the only foe they had to dread; but, with the aid of their new allies, they speedily compelled them to evacuate the moun-

tains; and, once more, Lucerna and its surrounding valleys, were peopled with their expatriated inhabitants; their hamlets restored, their sanctuaries thrown open, “their swords changed into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks!”

The enraptured feelings of the exiles, when they found themselves once more in the land of their birth, is what the imagination may feebly picture, but cannot be described. Day after day, the prisons of Piedmont, in which hundreds of the sufferers had for years scarce seen the light of the sun, were emptied of their captives, to whom the air of heaven would, in any circumstances, have been a happy exchange for the pestilential vapours of a dungeon; but how sweet was that liberty, which permitted them to breathe the air of their own lovely mountains, and luxuriate amid haunts hallowed by the noblest and most endearing associations!—A detachment was deputed to proceed to the Swiss cantons, to bring back the female refugees, who had been left behind; and never can that night be forgotten in the annals of Lucerna, when, under a bright setting sun, the returning wanderers were seen wending their way up the lovely valley. Ties, which they imagined had been dissolved for ever, again cemented,—wives restored to the embrace of their husbands,—children to parents,—brothers to sisters,—friends to friends! Their joy,

indeed, was in few instances unmingled with sorrow; few were without their bereavements,—but, gratitude for present mercies, softened and alleviated the bitter recollections of the past.

An early day was, by general consent, appointed for public thanksgiving to the God of their fathers, for the signal deliverance he had vouchsafed them. Villar, from its central situation, was selected as the place of rendezvous, and, at an early hour, on the appointed morning, groups from the surrounding communes, poured into the little hamlet. The place of meeting was on the slope of one of those lovely grassy banks, which skirt the margin of the Pelice, with sylvan glories on every side. It was a point, which commanded the whole extent of the valley of Lucerna, from the savage grandeur of the Col de la Croix, down to the verdant plains and vineyards of St Giovanni and Piedmont. A rude platform was erected on a natural elevation, from which Arnaud conducted the services. The scene was one of patriarchal simplicity. It would be vain to attempt depicting the thousand interesting countenances that surrounded their peasant hero; tears of grief and joy mingled profusely on the grassy turf, as they recounted to each other the tale of their personal sufferings, or poured out their tribute of thanksgiving for their wonderful deliverances.

There was one little group, stationed immediately under the speaker, which we cannot pass over in silence. It was Herbert Vinçon and Ferdinand Arnaud, seated once more by the side of those, whose visions had haunted many a dream, on the cold sod, in the lonely cell, and in the hour of battle.—Alice and Julia still retained in their countenances, traces of deep sorrow, and protracted seasons of anxiety and fear; but the lustre which lighted up their dark eyes, indicated, that for a while at least, the painful scenes of the past were forgotten, in the ecstasy of the present hour.

Two other individuals, who seemed not to be the least delighted participants in the day of jubilee, completed the interesting group. These were, an aged man, arrayed in a shepherd's garb, whose silvery locks hung with patriarchal grace over his shoulders,—and an elderly female, seated at his side, who was listening with astonished interest to the anecdotes of danger, peril, and suffering rehearsed by the two youthful champions. A sagacious mastiff lay stretched at their feet, whose grey hairs that were beginning to mingle with the jet of his glossy hide, intimated that he too, like his master, was fast sinking in years. Albert and Mariette Peyrani preferred parting with their chalet and their folds, to bidding farewell to those, who, during a residence of nearly three winters in their mountain

home, had entwined themselves with filial affection around their hearts. When the messengers arrived to conduct their adopted charge to their native valleys, the shepherd of Lauterbrunnen, in the spirit of the affectionate Moabitess, exclaimed, as by turns he clasped them in his arms, "whither thou goest, I will go,—and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me." As we have already said, he had often longed for an opportunity, of visiting the homes of his ancestry, the sweet abodes of piety and truth; besides, he was beginning, from his advanced age, to be incapacitated for the arduous toils of a mountain life; and he rejoiced that Providence had now put it in his power to spend his declining years among the fertile vineyards and olive groves of Lucerna, under the genial sunshine of an Italian sky, and gladdened by the Christian converse of those, whom he loved as his own soul.

The services of the day were conducted with devout simplicity. The address of Arnaud, teemed with his wonted enthusiasm and ardent piety. He seemed to catch new inspiration in the spot where he stood, from the varied landscape around him, and the still more cheering sympathies of a thou-

sand Christian hearts, beating responsive to his own.

It had been the great aim of this noble patriot, since the first hour when they set out on their enterprise, to lead their thoughts to a higher than human strength, and to look for success, to a stronger than human arm. And now, when their triumphant standards were planted on their native soil, and when, in the flush of victory, the pride of the human spirit would have been most apt to exult over the feats of its own prowess, he made it still his anxious endeavour to impress on their minds, that “not unto them,—not unto him, but unto God alone, belonged all the glory.”

He, accordingly, selected as the subject of his address, the song of deliverance of the Church of old :

“ If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say ;
If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us ;
Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us ;
Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul :
Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
Our soul is escaped as a bird, out of the snare of the fowlers :
The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

“ Dear friends,” continued he, as he concluded his animated discourse, “ God has restored the scattered sheep to the fold of their fathers,—but where are the shepherds? A cloud of sorrow darkens this hour of joy, when I look, in vain, among the faces around me, for the aged patriarchs who were wont to dispense to us the bread of life, to comfort us in the hour of sorrow, to cheer us in the hour of death.—Alas, when I look to that humble spire,” said he, pointing to the little sanctuary at Villar, “ it reminds me of one, whose memory is too deep for tears. Yes,” said the peasant warrior, his eye filling as he spoke,—“ Rodolph Vinçon—the patriarch of the valleys, the kind parent, the faithful pastor, the affectionate friend, is now no more! Yonder cold mountain is the home of his body! To him who was worthy of the best grave in Lucerna, has been assigned the turf of an Alpine solitude! But he has gone to “ the rest which remaineth for the people of God”—and never shall we again see him, till that day when the martyred dead shall appear with their risen Lord! Oh! that the thought of his being added to the cloud of witnesses, may animate us in our Christian conflict, to follow his steps and participate in his crown!

There is one here, upon whom the mantle of the patriarch’s virtues, as well as his name, has fallen. One, whose pious spirit has borne up un-

der many a dark hour,—and whose daring heroism has contributed in turning the tide of many a doubtful conflict;—and, methinks no voice will sound sweeter in the sanctuary which was wont to be hallowed by the piety of him who is now departed,—than that of—Herbert Vinçon!” A murmur of applause, from the attentive audience, expressed their joyful acquiescence in the proposal. After Arnaud had submitted to them some other measures, relative to their settlement in their ancient possessions, and exhorted them not to allow the wrongs and sufferings of the past to shake their loyalty and allegiance to their rightful sovereign,—they united together, before separating, in singing the beautiful hymn of the returning captives from Babylon, whose exile was in many respects so similar to their own.

When Zion's bondage God turned back,
Like men that dreamed were we !
Then, filled with laughter was our mouth,
Our tongue with melody.

They 'mong the heathen said, the Lord
Great things for them hath wrought :
The Lord hath done great things for us,
Whence joy to us is brought !

As streams of water in the south,
Our bondage, Lord, recall,
Who sow in tears, a reaping time
Of joy, enjoy they shall !

That man, who, bearing precious seed,
In going forth doth mourn,
He, doubtless, bringing back his sheaves,
Rejoicing shall return.*

We have followed the Waldensian exiles in their adversity,—we must leave it to imagination to follow them in their prosperity. Arnaud felt himself bound to fulfil his promise of once more abandoning, for a short time, the quiet of domestic life, for the din of camps and the heat of battles, to assist his sovereign in humbling the haughty spirit of their common enemy. He marched at the head of a thousand men, to ravage the French frontier; opened the passes of Piedmont to the armies of Eugene,—and, by his skilful manœuvring, in detaining the French troops in the south, while the allied armies were collecting their strength in the Low Countries, he materially contributed to the laurels of Hochstett and Blenheim.

Only a few weeks elapsed, before the pastors who had survived the persecution, assembled together to appoint overseers for the bereaved flocks. Herbert Vinçon was solemnly set apart, by the laying

* See Appendix, note H.

on of the hands of the Presbytery, for the charge of his deceased parent; and Ferdinand Arnaud had allotted to him, the romantic commune of Rora.* The destinies of the two families had now been for long united, and their mutual friendships deepened into more tender attachments. Herbert received the hand of the companion of Alice in her exile,—while young Arnaud was united to the orphan sister of one, who, from his earliest years, in prosperity, as well as in adversity, had proved his unfailing friend.

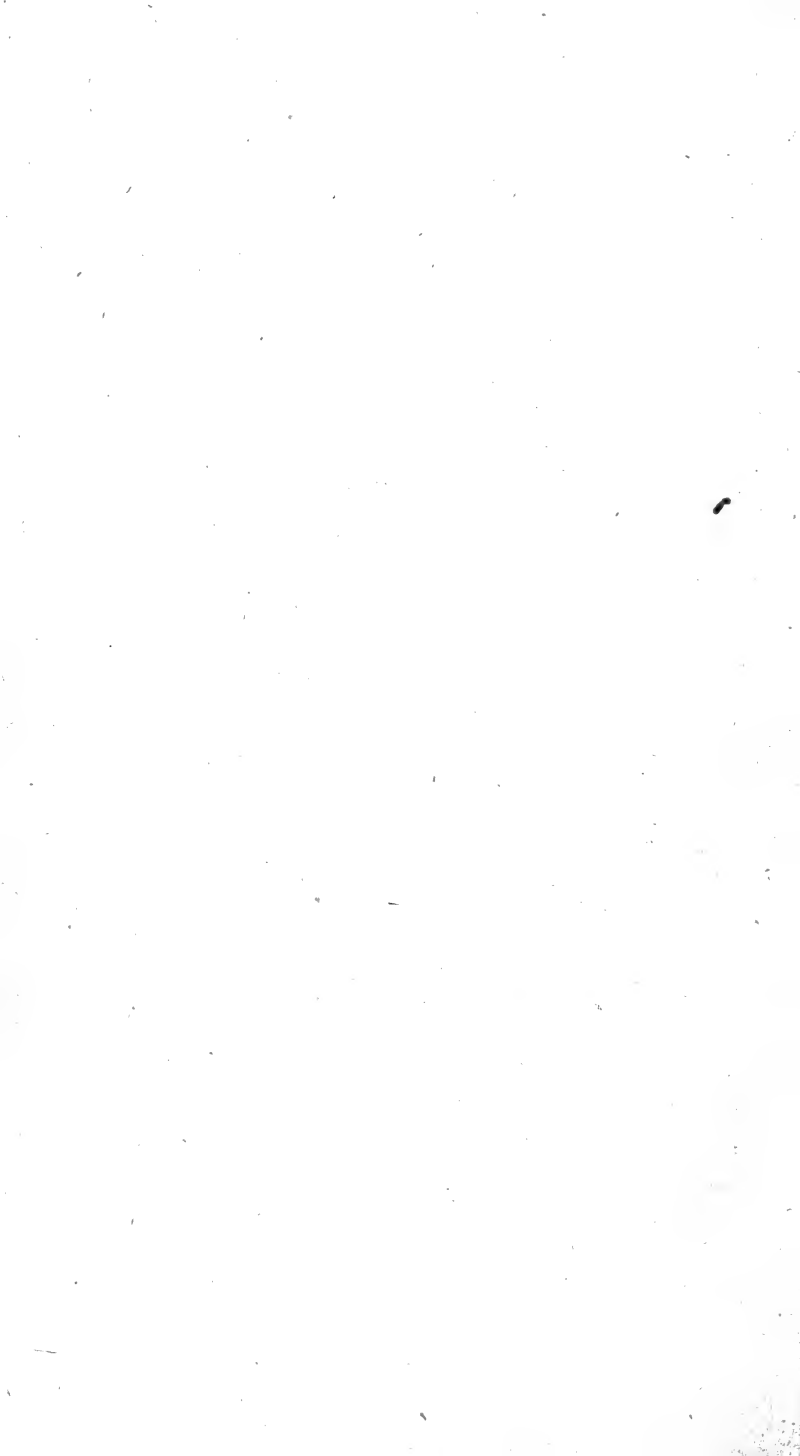
In a humble cot, in the commune of Villar, surrounded with a little garden, and over-arched by a luxuriant vine, trellissed on poles, which supported the projecting roof, Albert and Mariette Peyrani spent their declining days. The evening of this aged Christian's life was without a cloud; he fell asleep, amid the tears of affectionate friends, exulting in the same hope which had gladdened him in his journey through this vale of sorrow, and of which, death ushered him into the full fruition. His longing wish was fulfilled:—His head was laid in the tomb by a beloved pastor, and his ashes were mingled with the honoured dust of his martyred forefathers, in the church-yard of Villar.

Thus did the light of truth again burn in the

* See Appendix, note G.

valleys of Piedmont, when it was on the point of being extinguished for ever;—the scattered flock once more were permitted to worship within the enclosures of their own fold, “without any to make them afraid;” and while many desponding hearts had been sending up their complaint to Heaven, “Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars!—What said the answer of God unto them?—I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee unto Baal!”





APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

Napoleon himself could not withhold his tribute, to the almost incredible bravery exhibited by these mountaineers in the course of this persecution. At his interview with Peyrani, the late Moderator of the Vaudois church, the following conversation took place :—

Napoleon. “ You are one of the Protestant clergy?”

Peyrani. “ Yes, sire, and moderator of the Vaudois Church.”

Nap. “ You are schismatics from the Roman Church?”

Peyr. “ Not schismatics, I hope, but separatists, from scruples of conscience, on grounds that we consider to be scriptural.”

Nap. “ You have had some brave men among you, but your mountains are the best ramparts

you can have. Cæsar found some trouble in passing your defiles with his legions. *Is Arnaud's 'La Rentrée Glorieuse' correct?*"

Peyr. "Yes, sire, believing our people to have been assisted by Providence," &c. &c.

—See DR GILLY'S *Researches*.

NOTE B.

AT this moment, the churches in the sequestered valleys of Dauphiny are in a deeply interesting state. Christianity and human nature are still to be found there in their most primitive condition. The wild and sterile magnificence of this mountain region does not possess for the traveller, the attractiveness of the rich and picturesque valleys of the Waldenses; and consequently the beautiful native simplicity of character of these "tenants of the rock," has not suffered the contamination which intercourse with strangers is often found to produce. Their dress, their appearance, their manners, their mode of life, are quite unique. The old men still retain the cumbrous cocked hat, and pig-tailed quieu, the short coat, knee breeches, and other relics of patriarchal simplicity, which,

to a Scotchman, would almost point them out as the prototypes of the Covenanters of other days. Their food is a brown bread of unsifted rye, baked annually, and serves for the whole season; and their miserable hovels contain within their mud walls, in exemplary harmony, goats, mules, cows, poultry, and human beings. Yet all is peace and contentment. The stranger who enters these humble cots, will not be long of discovering the compatibility of intelligence, domestic happiness, and an elevated tone of piety, with much outward wretchedness, poverty, and filth. We cannot resist this opportunity of recommending the perusal of Dr Gilly's interesting "Memoir of Felix Neff," a young Swiss, who consecrated his life to the noble task of ministering to the spiritual and temporal comforts of these secluded mountaineers. His perilous labours among snows, glaciers, and wintry tempests, were worthy of the spirit of a martyr. Often, for months together, would he domicile himself amid the gloomy wilds of Dormilleuse, the highest inhabited spot in Europe, with nothing but a stable for his home; or travel for twenty or thirty miles on foot, to impart instruction or consolation to his scattered flock, although that could frequently be accomplished only by having steps cut in the ice, or by passing through defiles overhung by the avalanche. He fell

a sacrifice, in the prime of youth, to his unremitting toils ; but there are hundreds in these lonely glens, who still speak of him as their spiritual father, and whose children “ rise up and call him blessed.”

NOTE C.

The interest which Cromwell took in the cause of the suffering Protestants, forms a redeeming quality in his character, and would almost seem to account, in some degree, for the smiles which Providence cast upon him in his extraordinary career. During the barbarous persecution of the Waldenses which took place in 1655, thirty years previous to that which we have described, he shone conspicuous among their benefactors. Milton, whose beautiful sonnet “on the massacre of the Vaudois,” is prefixed to the first chapter, had at this time great influence at court ; and letters written by his classical pen, in behalf of the persecuted, were despatched from the English throne to the monarchs of France, Sweden, Denmark, the Duke of Savoy, and the States-General of the United Provinces. One only of these we shall here tran-

scribe, as a specimen. It was sent in 1655 from Cromwell to the Duke of Savoy.

“ MOST SERENE PRINCE—

“ We are informed by letters received from several places in the vicinity of your dominions, that the subjects of your royal highness professing the reformed religion, have been commanded by an edict, published by your authority, to quit their habitations and lands, within three days after the promulgation of the said edict, under pain of death, and the confiscation of their property, unless they shall enter into an engagement to abjure their own, and to embrace the Roman Catholic faith, before the end of twenty days. We have learned also, that, regardless of their humble petitions to your highness, praying that you would be pleased to revoke the said edict, and to grant the same privileges, which were anciently conceded by your serene ancestors, your army fell upon them, cruelly slaughtered great numbers, imprisoned others, and drove the rest to flee for refuge to desolate places, and to mountains covered with snow, where hundreds of families are reduced to such extremity, that, it is to be feared, they will all shortly perish with cold and hunger. Upon receiving intelligence of the melancholy condition of this oppressed people, it was impossible

not to feel the greatest commiseration and grief; for we not only consider ourselves united to them by common ties of humanity, but by those of the same religion. Feeling, therefore, that we are invoked by the sacred voice of brotherly love, we declare that we should fail in our duty to ourselves, to God, to our brethren, and to the religion we profess, if we were not deeply moved by a sense of their calamities, and if we did not employ every means in our power, to obtain an alleviation of their unparalleled sufferings. It is on this account that we most earnestly entreat, and conjure your highness, in the first place, to call to mind the enactments of your serene ancestors, and the concessions which they made and confirmed from time to time in favour of the Waldenses; which concessions were granted, no doubt, in obedience to the will of God, who desires that liberty of conscience should be the inviolable right of every man, and in consideration of the merits of these their subjects, who have ever been found valiant and faithful in war, and obedient in time of peace. And as your serene highness has graciously and nobly trodden in the steps of your predecessors in all other things, we again and again beseech you, that you will not depart from them in this instance, but that you will revoke this edict, and any other that is oppressive to your subjects, in conse-

quence of their professing the reformed religion ; that you will restore them to their paternal habitations and property ; that you will confirm their ancient rights and privileges ; that you will cause reparation to be made for their injuries ; and order an end to be put to all vexatious proceedings against them. If your highness will comply with this request, you will do what is most acceptable to God ; you will comfort and support the minds of those unhappy sufferers, and you will be conferring a favour upon the neighbouring Protestant states, and especially upon us, who will ever consider such clemency as the effect of our intercession ; which will constrain us to do every kind office in return, and will be the means not only of strengthening, but of renewing and increasing the relations and friendship which has subsisted between this commonwealth and your dominions. Promising ourselves much from your justice and moderation, we heartily pray God to direct your mind and thoughts, and so to grant you and your people the blessings of peace and truth, and to prosper all your undertakings.

“ Given at our Court at Westminster, the 25th day of May 1655.

“ OLIVER, PROTECTOR.”

It is delightful to mark the deep sympathy

which was felt at this time by all the Protestant states of Christendom, for the sufferings of these innocent mountaineers. We find the Swiss cantons ordering a day for public humiliation, and recommending a general subscription for their relief. This example was followed in England and Ireland; Cromwell proclaimed a national fast; a vivid delineation of their distresses was, by his orders, printed and circulated, and the sum of L.38,241, 1s. 6d. was raised, headed by a contribution of L.2000 from the privy purse.

Not contented with these preliminary measures, the Protector deputed Sir Samuel Morland to proceed as an envoy to the Court at Turin, and demand a public audience of the Duke of Savoy, to remonstrate with him on his cruel policy towards his unoffending subjects. The conference took place at Rivoli, in presence of the royal family and the whole court. The address of the young diplomatist is characterised throughout by deep feeling. We can only afford space for a quotation.

“ The most serene Protector of England hath been informed, that part of these most miserable people have been cruelly massacred by your forces, part driven out by violence, and forced to leave their native habitations; and so, without house or shelter, poor and destitute of all relief, do wander up and down, with their wives and children, in

craggy and uninhabitable places, and mountains covered with snow. Oh! the fired houses which are yet smoking, the torn limbs, and ground defiled with blood!

* * * * *

“Some men, an hundred years old, decrepit with age and bedrid, have been burned in their beds. Some infants have been dashed against the rocks, others have had their throats cut, whose brains have, with more than Cyclopean cruelty, been boiled and eaten by the murderers! What need I mention more, although I could reckon up very many cruelties of the same kind, if I were not astonished at the very thought of them. If all the tyrants of all times and ages were alive again, (which I would speak without any offence to your highness, seeing we believe none of these things were done through any default of yours,) certainly they would be ashamed when they should find that they had contrived nothing in comparison with these things, that might be reputed barbarous and inhuman.

“In the mean time, the angels are surprised with horror; men are amazed; heaven itself seems to be astonished with the cries of dying men; and the very earth to blush, being discoloured with the gore and blood of so many innocent persons! Do not thou, O thou Most High God, do not thou

take that revenge, which is due to so great wickednesses, and horrible villanies! Let thy blood, O Christ, wash away this blood!"

NOTE D.

The Valley of Pragelas is now, alas! no longer what it once was,—the stronghold of Protestantism. By a base infraction of the most sacred and binding engagements on the part of the house of Bourbon, its inhabitants were cruelly deprived of the religious prerogatives which from time immemorial they possessed. "Their churches," remarks one of their own ancient historians, "are truly Protestant, time out of mind: their old people (and some are about an hundred years old,) have never heard from their fathers or grandfathers, that mass was ever sung in their country." Louis XIV., in direct violation of the solemn treaties of his predecessors, Henry IV. and Louis XIII., ceded this magnificent valley to Victor Amadeus, *on the express condition*, that the Protestants should be exterminated. "And where are the Bourbons now?" is the impressive comment

of Dr Gilly, on this act of regal perjury, “ Righteous art thou, O Lord!”

Though nominally catholic, however, there is still left a small remnant, imbued with the ancient spirit, who sigh in secret over its desolations. The catholic priests are at this moment watching with a jealous eye, every symptom of returning life, fearful lest these smouldering ashes should again burst into a flame. An emissary of the Vatican lately scoured the valley, demanded admittance into every suspected cot and hamlet, and the result of his scrutiny was a collection of upwards of sixty Bibles, Testaments, and Protestant catechisms, which he committed indiscriminately to the flames! The young native, who told the circumstance, mentioned that his own uncle was among the number who had to deliver up the treasured volume into the hands of the ecclesiastical plunderer; but added, that another now supplied its place, carefully secreted from future depredators.

NOTE E.

Castelluzzo is a bold rock, which crowns the summit of Mont Vaudelin in the Valley of Lucerna, in which there is formed a natural cavern, where three or four hundred Vaudois were wont to take refuge in the hour of persecution. The entrance was so narrow as only to admit one person at a time, it had a fountain of water, and was spacious enough to contain a large supply of provisions and ammunition.

NOTE F.

Instances are by no means uncommon in the Waldensian history, of those who externally avowed a Catholic creed, secretly countenancing the persecuted Protestants, as we have described in the case of Father Bernard; and among these not a few of noble birth, whose favour for the truth would never have been known, had they not fallen sacrifices to their valour, and been discovered among the slain. A remarkable example is relat-

ed by Jones in his interesting history, as having taken place after the battle of Muret in Gascony: "A singular disclosure was made after the battle; and as the circumstance tends to throw a ray of light upon the secret history of these times, it deserves to be recorded. When the battle of Muret was over, there was found among the slain, belonging to the Albigenses, a knight in black armour. On examination, behold, it was found to be none other than Peter, king of Arragon. There also lay one of his sons, and many of the Arragonian gentlemen and vassals, who, while ostensibly supporting the Roman church, had, in disguise, been fighting in defence of the Albigenses."

NOTE G.

It was in this commune, that Victor Amadeus took refuge, a few years subsequent to the persecution we have described, when pursued by the armies of Louis XIV. A remarkable proof of the reliance he placed in the loyalty of his Vaudois subjects, in selecting, as the place of his concealment, the home of one of those very people who had still fresh in their recollection those aggra-

vated barbarities of which he had been the guilty author. Nor was his confidence misplaced, although the revealer would have been richly remunerated for delivering up the royal fugitive. He remained concealed for a fortnight in the cottage of a peasant, till his capital was regained by Prince Eugene; and he rewarded the faithfulness of the mountaineer, by presenting him with—his silver drinking cup!!

NOTE H.

Many learned writers, and among these Faber, Bishop Lloyd, Boyer, and Whiston, have considered the prophecy regarding the “two Witnesses” in Revelation, as referring to the Waldensian and Albigensian churches, and their slaughter and restoration to life there predicted, having received its accomplishment in the persecution we have described. The passage in the Apocalypse, it will be remembered, is as follows: “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street

of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves; and they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another: because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth; and *after three days and a half*, the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them."

The most striking coincidence between the prophecy and its alleged fulfilment in this persecution, is the period of duration, three prophetic days and a half, *i. e.* three years and a half, during which the "dead bodies" of the Witnesses were to lie unburied "in the street," being the exact space of time which elapsed between the expatriation of the Vaudois by the edict of Amadeus in 1686, and their return and re-establishment in 1690. And certainly the slaughter and sudden infusion of life described in the verses above, are no inappropriate emblems of the political extinction and sudden resuscitation of these faithful "witnesses for the truth."

Bishop Newton, after making some observations

on the opinions of those who support such an interpretation, remarks, "that Bishop Lloyd not only understood the prophecy in this manner, but what is very remarkable, made the application even before the event took place, and upon this ground, encouraged a refugee minister of the Vaudois, whose name was Jordan, to return home, *and returning, he heard the joyful news of the deliverance and restitution of his country!*"

Writers, however, of equal authority, consider that there are discrepancies which render this interpretation inadmissible. We shall not attempt to lay before the reader the various arguments that have been advanced on both sides of this controverted subject; far less, venture an opinion of our own. It is more than probable, that in this persecution, the prophecy obtained a partial, though incomplete fulfilment, and that, in the words of Newton, "it may please an overruling providence so to dispose and order events, that the calamities and afflictions of the Church may in some measure run parallel one to another, and all the former efforts of that tyrannical and persecuting power called the beast, may be the types and figures of his last and greatest effort against the Witnesses." — *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, p. 567.

Since the period of the persecution which we have attempted to illustrate in the preceding narrative, the Vaudois Church has continued to enjoy for upwards of a century and a half, a season of comparative outward tranquillity. Arnaud was not suffered long to taste the sweets of that domestic bliss, whose visions had animated and consoled him in the midst of his arduous struggles. That providence would grant a peaceful termination to his declining years, was the earnest prayer of the grateful people who regarded him, under providence, as their deliverer :—and had his royal master been actuated by principles of gratitude or of honour, he would gratefully have responded to their wishes, and made honourable provision for one whose prowess had so materially contributed in restoring him to his hereditary dominions. But he was not permitted to close his eyes in “the land of promise;”—his paternal anxiety to adjust some unhappy differences that had arisen among his brethren, relative to the division of their old possessions, was construed by the invidious enemies of his faith into an attempt to form an independent republic ;—a price was set upon his head—and in 1709, at the advanced age of seventy, he fled in disguise, never again to return to his native valleys.

Notwithstanding pressing invitations from William III., Queen Anne, and Prince Eugene, to reside at their Courts, and the most flattering promises of honourable provision, he preferred the humble task of *pastor*, to all that courts or princes could offer ; and as soon as he had settled the affairs of the Wirtemberg colonies, he took up his abode in the midst of them, in the village of Schöenberg, where he fulfilled the duties of his office for the remaining twelve years of his life : in this seclusion he wrote “*La Rentrée Glorieuse*,” and some other memoirs which have never been printed.

The great destitution to which the Waldenses were reduced upon their return to the valleys, excited a spirit of universal sympathy among the Protestant states of Europe ; and William and Mary generously contributed L.500 per annum, for the relief and support of their clergy. This munificent benefaction continued till the year 1797, when the triumphs of Napoleon appended Piedmont to the French dominions, and the annuity from England was withdrawn. Their new master ordered them to be enrolled with the national clergy of France, and lands were allotted for their maintenance, which yielded to each of the pastors a yearly income of 1000 francs.

At the termination of the war in 1814, Wilberforce found in the cause of this oppressed people,

an object worthy of his enlarged philanthropy ; and devoted his influence to obtain a renewal of the grant. His efforts, however, proved unsuccessful, but by the exertions of Dr Gilly, the unwearied friend of the Alpine Protestants, whose name is now a household word in the remotest hamlets of their secluded glens—it was restored in 1827; and they are now in the receipt of L.277 annually from the British Government, one third of which is appropriated for the relief of widows and superannuated pastors, and the remainder is divided among the thirteen regular ministers of the valleys. Besides this, L.292 from the English Society for Propagating the Gospel, is annually transmitted to them, being the interest of L.10,000, collected under the patronage of George III.

Although the storm of open persecution, however, has for a long period been hushed, they are still a suffering people—cruelly burdened with civil and religious disabilities. The spirit of Victor Amadeus still haunts the royal palace at Turin ; and the age when confessors, not monarchs, were wont to sway the imperial sceptre, seems not yet to have passed away. They are interdicted from holding offices of public trust—from practising as physicians, advocates, or notaries ; formerly they were allowed the privilege of purchasing land *beyond* the limits of their valleys ; now, however, not

only is this denied them, but a heavier impost on property *within* the valleys is levied from a Protestant, than from a Roman Catholic purchaser. The land, for which the latter pays a tax of seventy francs, is burdened to the former with a tax of a hundred. The consequence is evident. The Protestants being unable to contend with so heavy a disadvantage, are yearly suffering a diminution in the extent of their territories, so much so, indeed, that in a short time it is to be feared their scanty limits will prove insufficient for the maintenance of an overcrowded population. They are disqualified from holding any situation in the army above the rank of a serjeant :—they are compelled to abstain from all work on Roman Catholic fête days : and even their ancient innocent pastimes and recreations, if not strictly prohibited, are at least so burdened with expensive regulations, as to render their performance next to impossible. Their pastors are not permitted to vindicate their own religious opinions, though these be openly attacked and misrepresented. A volume was lately issued from the press at Turin, from the pen of a Roman Catholic dignitary, in the shape of a challenge to the pastors of the valleys, to refute the errors of Romanism. The book remains unanswered—and why? Is it because these pious men want the power or inclination to cope with an adversary they

feel to be too formidable? There is not a pastor from Rora to Rodoretto who is not ready to take up the gauntlet—ay, and able too, to demolish the flimsy sophistry of the polemic. How comes it then, that if provided with ammunition, they permit the stores of their arsenal to remain unemployed? Let bigotry answer:—*they dare not!* The price of a controversial triumph, however easily won, would be persecution, imprisonment, or expatriation. On the other hand, the natural conclusion drawn by the Catholic population, from their silence in allowing this volume to remain *unanswered*, is that it is *unanswerable*. The eldest son of M. Muston, pastor of Bobbio, was driven from his father's roof and his native valleys, for the heinous crime of publishing at Strasburg, a history of his suffering forefathers?

So strict and galling is the system of espionage adopted by their enemies, that even their private correspondence is not unfrequently subjected to official scrutiny. A proposal was lately made to institute a correspondence between one of our home missionary societies, and the pastors of the valleys:—cheering as the sympathy of distant Christians would be to these secluded people, in the midst of their trials, they were obliged to express their serious apprehensions as to the safety of entertaining the proposition—every suspicious

communication being seized and opened at the post-office of Turin, and a heavy penalty annexed to the crime of holding parley with heretics !

But what appears to a stranger the most intolerant act of oppression, is their being compelled to render an external homage to the popish ceremonies. A striking instance of this was witnessed last autumn in one of their communes. At the conclusion of the Sabbath-morning service, the clergyman happened to be in his garden, with some of his *anciens* (elders,) when a Catholic procession approached. As it passed along, they all stood uncovered, and it was mentioned by the pastor, that the failure to comply with this exacted homage, had, on one occasion, subjected his uncle to no less than twenty-four journeys to Turin, besides the forfeiture of a large sum of money.

A few years ago, a lofty barricade was erected in front of the Protestant church at St Giovanni, in order to prevent the impious services of its congregation, from disturbing the devotions of the worshippers in the adjoining Romish sanctuary ! The effects of time and weather,—not any abatement of their intolerance,—has now so far effected its demolition ; and the Catholics have been contented with the erection of an enormous screen in the interior of the “ temple,” to drown the unhallowed melody ! Often is the Protestant pastor

obliged to pause in the middle of the services, in consequence of interruption by popish ceremonies, which seem to be carefully contrived on such principles as may most conduce to the annoyance of the neighbouring worshippers. And strange ebullitions of piety, certainly, they are! a burlesque on the very name of devotion! Not to refer to sundry other of their accompaniments, it may be mentioned, that a most sacred part consists in the discharge, at stated intervals, of some pieces of cannon, which are inserted in the ground with their muzzles pointing to heaven. *And this within a few yards of the Protestant church!*

Amid great outward oppression, however, and many heavy disabilities, there is much that is cheering in the present condition of the Waldensian valleys. Within these few years, the blessings of education have been widely extended. This is to be attributed not a little to the munificence of Colonel B——, an Englishman, resident on the spot, who, in addition to the interest he has exhibited in many other schemes of local benevolence, has provided more particularly for the wants of the rising generation,—there being scarcely a *commune* but contains, in its village school, a monument of his Christian philanthropy.

It was formerly necessary for the young men who were preparing for the ministry, to receive

their education at the colleges of Geneva or Lausanne. Besides the other untoward influences to which the removal from their native valleys subjected these youthful mountaineers, it was scarcely to be expected that they could escape altogether uncontaminated by the rationalism and Socinianism, which are so fearfully withering the Christianity of Switzerland. The establishment of a native college, however, where they receive their elementary education, has added another to the many noble exertions of Dr Gilly in behalf of the Vaudois ; and they may consider themselves fortunate in having such an individual as M. Revel, the professor, to superintend the training of their future pastors.

It may be mentioned, as a proof that the martyr's spirit still slumbers in the bosoms of the Waldenses, that, when an attempt was made, some years ago, by one of their pastors, to amalgamate the corrupted doctrines of the Geneva church with the "purity of the faith delivered to the saints," the attempt produced an instant recoil on the part of the humble peasantry, who refused to "touch the unclean thing," and many of whom, amid cruel mockings and domestic persecution, held meetings for religious worship, like their forefathers, among their dens and caverns. But now

that passing cloud has vanished, and has been succeeded by a cheering sunshine. In the parish of St Giovanni, where the differences originated,—since a memorable Sabbath when its pulpit was filled by Felix Neff, “the Apostle of the Alps,”—a revival has been steadily progressing, not unworthy of being numbered among those, with which the Great Husbandman has of late been refreshing desolate spots in his vineyard throughout Christendom. M. Meille, the former pastor, who, sinking under a load of years, has been obliged to resign his more active duties to a younger disciple of the cross, is watching with paternal interest these cheering symptoms of spiritual life; and to the heavenly mind of this devoted saint, there seems to be “no greater joy than to see his children walking in the truth.” No spectacle can be more delightful than to witness the aged patriarch seated on Sabbath morning among those to whom for long he dealt out the bread of life, and in whom he now beholds all his fondest hopes and ardent prayers fulfilled.

This very awakening, however, has been the signal for heaping fresh disabilities on the pious mountaineers. Since the day to which we have referred, an edict has been issued, prohibiting any stranger from preaching within the limits of the valleys; and expatriation hangs suspended over

the head of the pastor, who would dare thus to throw open his pulpit !

On the whole, the Waldenses possess claims on the sympathies and interest of the Christian world, not less on account of their past than of their present condition ; and their little fairy land still nurses within its bosom those, who have not forgotten the cost at which their Protestantism was secured to them, and who are as ready as ever, if need be, to assert their spiritual liberties. We are not prepared, indeed, to subscribe to the glowing panegyrics of some enthusiastic travellers, who have attributed to them a perfection which never can belong to humanity, as if theirs were some isolated spot to which fabled virtue, when she left mankind, bequeathed her mantle. They are the mistaken, not the real friends of that primitive people, who would arrogate for them a purity which is not mortal, exciting expectations which, when they come to be tested by actual observation, will be sure to disappoint. That there are blemishes in their character, lights and shadows in the picture, no one who has had an opportunity of mingling in their society will be disposed to deny. But when we take into consideration the disadvantages under which they labour, the privileges of which they are deprived, the contagious influences to which they are exposed, we

cannot fail to regard this simple-minded race as still continuing, what for ages they have been,—one of the living wonders of the world; and their valleys a little *oasis*, which appears all the brighter and lovelier from its contrast with the dreary wilderness around it.

THE END.



